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THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER IN  
THE U.S. NAVY

by

Douglas S. Borrebach

and

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June 1994

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Gail Fann Thomas  
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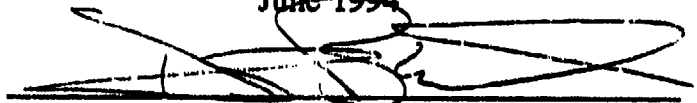
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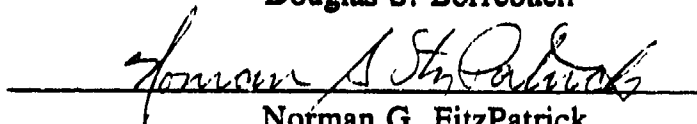
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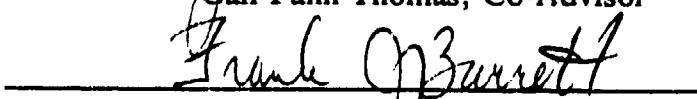


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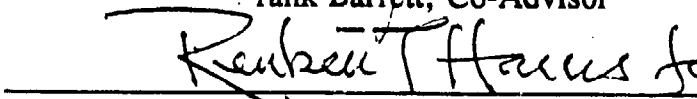
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the social construction of masculinity in the U.S. Navy and its implication for the successful integration of women. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews of 40 Naval Academy graduates were the major source of data.

The literature explores the construction of masculinity and how the identity of men is developed through social interaction.

Constant comparative analysis of qualitative data yielded 15 major themes. The themes display various ways in which masculinity is reproduced, transmitted, and enforced among the Naval Officers interviewed. The conclusion provides recommended actions to foster the full integration of women in the Navy.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past 22 years the Navy has managed the rapid introduction of large numbers of women into what has been historically a conservative, predominantly male organization. The number of women in the Navy has increased from about 9,000 (1.5%) in 1972 to over 57,600 (11%) today. Throughout this period women have been assigned to an expanding number of occupational fields, so that today, women serve in 90 of 104 enlisted ratings and in all but two officer communities (submarines and special warfare).

These developments should be viewed in their historical context. In 1972, the Nixon administration decided not to request that Congress extend the Selective Service Act induction authority when it expired in July 1973. As a result, the military became an All-Volunteer Force. Contributing to this decision were attitudes springing from the Vietnam War, which resulted in opposition to the draft and a decreased willingness among young men to serve in the military. In addition, demographic projections indicated that there would be a declining population of males to recruit, forcing the services to make optimal use of all available volunteers. Concurrently, the social commitment to remove gender-based obstacles to the full and equitable participation of women in the American society (as reflected in the Congressional

passage of the Equal Rights Amendment and in a variety of other civil rights legislation) paved the way for women to increase their percentage of military manpower and their contribution to the Navy's mission. In short, military personnel requirements indicated a need for increased utilization of women at a time when changing social priorities required that women's participation be guided by fair and equitable rules. (DON, 1990, p. 1-1)

Navy leaders set in motion a determined effort to meet these dual, related goals, and the growth of women's participation cited above documents the expansion which has taken place in a very complex environment during a very short period of time. The area in which a great deal of controversy still exists is whether women should be permitted to participate in those occupational fields that will expose them to combat.

With the passage of The FY94 Defense Authorization Bill opening all naval vessels to women, the Navy has developed plans for the progressive assignment of women to combat ships. Initially, in 1994 women will be assigned to two Spruance-class destroyers, one on each coast, followed by two Burke-class destroyers, two Whidbey Island-class dock landing ships, and two nuclear aircraft carriers Eisenhower and Lincoln. As

many as 650 women could be assigned to the carriers. The assignment of females to carrier based squadrons is also in progress as there are numerous female pilots currently training in the fleet replacement squadrons.

The new policy regarding women in combat has renewed the debate among men and women, both in the United States Navy and society in general, of whether the assimilation of women into the total force will optimize or diminish the United States Navy's fighting capabilities. No matter how someone approaches the issue of women in the military or in combat, someone will always have opinions that support women's participation and some will have opinions rejecting their participation. For example Mark Eitelberg expresses a supporting opinion by stating dissenting opinions and offering factual responses such as; Women will undermine the all-important element of cohesion or bonding in combat units by creating distractions. Yes, cohesion is critical; but where is your evidence that women will create problems? He also answers the often stated comment that women will not be accepted by men as coequal partners in combat situations; and men will not accept women as combat leaders by pointing out that women will be accepted; take a look at police and fire departments across the nation. (Eitelberg, 1990, p. 10)

The United States Navy is an organization which is continuously in transition. Dealing effectively with change in our Navy requires innovation, commitment, and leadership

from the very top. Additionally, education is a key component of implementing change in any organization. By eliminating gender bias from the work place, a more equitable environment will result which will enable leaders to manage military and civilian personnel more effectively..

The intent of this thesis is to determine what the attitudes of active duty male Naval Academy graduates are regarding women in the military as well as in combat. With decreasing force structure it becomes increasingly more important that issues concerning women in the military be resolved. By examining male Naval Academy graduates' attitudes and determining what the contributing causes of their attitudes are, this research will help naval officers understand gender bias and take corrective action in order to eliminate it from the work environment. We will look at the life experiences of male officers in an effort to appreciate the dynamics by which masculinity is constructed. In other words how do male officer candidates learn what it is to become successful masculine officers. In particular, we are interested in studying how gender bias is created, transmitted, and reproduced among naval officers.

Why Naval Academy graduates? 'The Academy' is a traditional male bastion, a central site of training, where young men are initiated into the ways of those who have gone before them, it is a right of passage. For 131 years, the Naval Academy operated in an all-male environment. In 1975,

Congress authorized women to enter the service Academies, and 81 women were admitted to the Academy in 1976. Fifty-five of these women graduated four years later with the class of 1980. Currently women comprise approximately 11 percent of the Brigade of Midshipmen, and that percentage has been as high as 12 percent. The integration of women into the Academies had been characterized as one of the most controversial issues surrounding women in the military. The Department of Defense opposed the legislation proposing the admission of women to the service academies and testified against it. During congressional hearings in 1972, the debate was often very strong. Each of the Academy superintendents and each service secretary, among others, testified against it. For example, a Navy captain, expressing his views against integrating the Academy, stated, " The Academy exists for one viable reason, to train seagoing naval officers... There is no room, no need, for a woman to be trained in this mode, since by law and by sociological practicalities, we would not have women in those seagoing or warfare specialties." (GAO, 1993, pp. 8-10)

In 1973, law suits were brought against the Air Force and the Navy by two women who wanted to enter those Academies and by four Members of Congress who objected to being required to discriminate on the basis of sex in making nominations for the Academies. In April 1974, the three military departments simultaneously promulgated almost identical official statements totally opposing admitting women to their

respective academies. President Ford, nevertheless, signed Public Law 94-106 on October 7, 1975, requiring the services to admit women to the Academies. At each Academy, the class of 1980, the first class with women, entered in 1976.

Deep seeded institutional bias. which existed at the service Academies as proven by the high level efforts to deny women acceptance into those institutions, serves as the foundation of today's 'glass ceiling' in the military and possibly the root of such well publicized scandals as Tailhook. The resistance is testimony to the ever-present belief in the need to protect masculine ethos. Naval Academy graduates also make up the greatest percentage of flag officers in the Navy, and often times assume high levels of leadership within the government such as; President, Senators, Congressmen and other positions of influence. Academy graduates are "born" in the system and by singling them out for this study we hope to identify institutional bias' which grow and mold today's officer corp.

The following chapters will address literature review, data collection methods, data analysis, and the summary and conclusions of our findings. The literature review will attempt to explain how masculinity is formed and transmitted by citing various contradictory theories and building a case for the social construction of masculinity and its dynamics within the male culture, it will also present sites in which masculinity is molded and maintained. The data collection

methodology chapter will discuss how we went about obtaining and analyzing our data to include an explanation of qualitative research and its merits. The data analysis chapter will be organized into recurring themes which will be supported by excerpts from our interviews. The final chapter will provide recommendations derived from the themes of the male officers interviewed.



## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

To interpret men's attitudes towards women in the military, we must first understand how men's attitudes regarding women are formed. This chapter will first point out some of the theoretical models researchers have used to account for the attitudes men have towards women in our society. In examining these theoretical models, we will identify contradictory evidence in each theory not only to raise uncertainty with each theory, but to support the theory that men's attitudes regarding women are socially constructed. We will then discuss how gender, and more specifically, masculinity is reproduced transmitted and enforced within our society through activities such as scouting, sports, violence, and homophobia.

### **A. THE THEORETICAL MODELS OF GENDER**

Researchers have studied gender for decades. Historically, there have been three general models that have governed social scientific research on gender. Biological models have focused on the ways in which inherent biological differences between males and females program different social behaviors. Anthropological models have examined gender cross-culturally, stressing the variations in the behaviors and attributes associated with being a man or woman. And until recently,

sociological models have stressed how socialization of boys and girls included accommodations to a "sex role" specific to one's biological sex. Although each of these perspectives helps to understand the meaning of masculinity and femininity, each is also limited in its ability to fully explain how gender operates in any culture. (Kimmel and Messner, 1992, p. 3)

Under the biological model, theorists believe the psychological differences observed between men and women are a result of physiological effects. For example, one biological model holds that the differences in endocrine functioning are the cause of gender difference. Under this model, testosterone predisposes males towards aggression, competition, and violence. Whereas estrogen predisposes females toward passivity, tenderness, and exaggerated emotionality. Others argue that male and females are governed by different halves of the brain. Males are directed by the left hemisphere, which controls rationality and abstract thought. Whereas, females are directed by the right hemisphere, which controls emotional affects and creativity. (Kimmel and Messner, 1992, P. 4)

The biological argument has been challenged by many theorists on several grounds. The implied causation between biological differences and behavioral differences is misleading. There is no logical reason to assume that one caused the other, or that the line of causation moves only from the biological to the social. Biological differences

between men and women would appear to set some parameters for differences in social behavior, but would not dictate the temperaments of men and women in any one culture. These psychological and social differences would appear to be the result of the ways in which cultures interpret, shape, and modify these biological inheritances. We may be born male or female, but we become men and women in a cultural context. (Kimmel and Messner, 1992, p. 4)

Many social scientists still rely on biological models of sex. The biological arguments maintain a privileged status in academic research about both gender and sexuality but, like all science, they help us understand cross-cultural regularities in behavior and attitudes, but cannot take us very far in understanding cultural variations. Much of social science research has been mired in tired formulations of sex role, those fixed, ahistorical containers of attributes and behaviors that are said to refer to masculinity and femininity. Biological males and biological females are sorted into these containers, where they are socialized into adopting the behaviors and attitudes appropriate to their gender. (Hearn and Morgan, 1990, p. 94)

The sex role model departs from a biological model in that its emphasis is on the acquisition of gender characteristics rather than their emergence from a biological imperative. But both suggest that what exists is supposed to exist as a result of biological or cultural evolution. Therefore relationships

based on power (the power of men over women) are seen as inevitable and natural, subject to neither challenge or change. That which is normative (constructed and enforced through social sanctions and socialization) begins to appear as normal, designed by nature acting through culture. But this is misleading. The normative is not normal, but the result of a long and complex set of social conflicts among groups. Therefore, by minimizing the historical variability of masculinity and femininity, both models minimize the capacity to change. (Hearn and Morgan, 1990, p. 95)

The origins of research on the 'male sex role' go back to late nineteenth-century debates about sex difference. Crisis tendencies in the gender order of industrializing Europe and North America were evident; there was a widespread movement for women's emancipation. This movement was countered by a scientific doctrine of innate sex difference, which justified the exclusion of women from authority, knowledge, and the institutions that represented them. Women's exclusion from universities, for instance, was justified by the claim that the feminine mind was too delicately poised to handle the rigors of academic work. The resulting mental disturbance would be bad for their capacities to be good wives and mothers. (Connell, 1994, p. 34)

Around the mid 20th century, sex difference research met up with a concept that seemed to explain its subject-matter in an up-to-date way, the concept of 'social role'. The meeting

gave birth to the term 'sex role' which in time passed into everyday speech. (Connell, 1994, p. 35)

Broadly, the sex role theory is the approach to social structure which locates its basic constraints in stereotyped interpersonal expectations. The basic idea is that being a man or a woman means enacting a general role definitive of one's sex. There are, accordingly, always two sex roles in a given context, the male role and the female role. (Connell, 1987, p. 42)

Scholars now are recognizing, that the sex role theory inadvertently simplifies the complexities of gender. First, though the sex role theory aims at identifying the social basis and thus the malleability of personality, sex role theory's tendency to insist on the existence of a 'male sex role' and a 'female sex role' inadvertently legitimizes and normalizes dominant forms of masculinity and femininity while marginalizing others. Secondly, the sex theory often assumes a false symmetry that ignores the existence of power inequalities between women and men. In defining masculinity and femininity as separate social scripts, the sex role theory ignores the extent to which gender is a dynamic relational process through which unequal power relations between women and men are constantly constructed and contested. (Messner & Sabo, 1990, p. 7-8).

Anthropologists take a different position on how cultures affect men and women. Some suggest that the universality of

gender differences comes from specific cultural adaptations to the environment, whereas others describe the cultural variations of gender roles, seeking to demonstrate the fluidity of gender and the primacy of cultural organization. Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox argue that the sexual division of labor is universal because of the different nature of bonding for males and females. They argue that nature intended mother and child to be together because mothers are a source of food and emotional security. Therefore, cultures prescribe various behaviors for women that emphasize nurturing and emotional connection. The bond between men is forged through the necessity of "competitive cooperation" in hunting. Men must cooperate with members of their own tribe in the hunt and yet compete for scarce resources with men in other tribes. Such bonds predispose men towards organization of modern corporation or government bureaucracy. (Kimmel and Messner, 1992, p. 5)

Such anthropological arguments omit as much as they include, and many scholars have pointed out problems with this model. Perhaps the best known challenge of this model comes from Margaret Mead. Mead insisted that the variations among cultures in their prescriptions of gender roles required the conclusion that culture was the more decisive cause of these differences. In her study, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (1935), she observed such wide variability among gender role prescription that any universality implied

by biological or anthropological models had to be rejected. Although the empirical accuracy of Mead's work has been challenged in its specific arguments, the general theoretical arguments remain convincing. (Kimmel and Messner, 1992, p. 5)

Psychological theories have also contributed to the discussion of gender roles. Psychologists have indicated that there are specific developmental sequences for both males and females. It has been argued that since it is normative for males to exhibit independence and the capacity for abstract reasoning, it is easier for them to negotiate these developmental sequences than it is for women. However, this model has been challenged by sociologists, Nancy Chodorow and Carol Gilligan. Both Chodorow and Gilligan point out that since masculinity is the normative standard in which both males and females are measured under psychological development, it would therefore make femininity problematic and less developed. Chodorow insists that the essential differences between men and women are socially constructed and hence subject to change. (Kimmel and Messner, 1992, pp. 5-6)

#### **B. HOW GENDER IS CONSTRUCTED**

Gender is a way in which social practice is ordered. In gender processes, the everyday conduct of life is organized in

relation to a reproductive arena, defined by the bodily structures and processes of human reproduction. Gender is social practice that constantly refers to bodies and what bodies do. (Connell, 1994, pp. 107-108)

Gender exists precisely to the extent that biology does not determine the social. It marks one of those points of transition where cultural processes supersede evolutionary biology. Sociobiologists are constantly trying to abolish it, by proving that human social arrangements are a reflex of evolutionary imperatives. (Connell, 1994, p. 108)

Social practice responds to particular situations and is generated within definite structures of social relations. Gender relations, the relations among people and groups organized through the reproductive arena, form one of the major structures of all documented societies. (Connell, 1994, p. 108)

The gender structuring of practice need have nothing biologically to do with reproduction. The link with the reproductive arena is social. This becomes clear when it is challenged. An example is the recent struggle in the United States over 'gays in the military', i.e. the rules excluding soldiers and sailors because of the gender of their sexual object-choice. Critics made the case for change in terms of civil liberties and efficiency, arguing implicitly that object-choice has little to do with the capacity to kill. Critics have said that generals defended the status quo on a



variety of spurious grounds. The unadmitted reason for the defense was the cultural importance of a particular definition of masculinity in maintaining the fragile cohesion of modern armies. (Connell, 1994, p. 110)

Gender is an internally complex structure, where a number of different logics are superimposed. This is a fact of great importance for the analysis of masculinity. Any one configuration is simultaneously positioned in a number of structures of relationship, which may be following different historical trajectories. Accordingly masculinity, like femininity, is always liable to internal contradiction and historical disruption. (Connell, 1994, p. 118)

Before we analyze masculinity we must first look at the areas which help construct gender. In his book MASCULINITIES: Knowledge, Power, and Social Change, Robert Connell (1994) discusses three structures that attribute to the construction of gender. These structures are power, labor and cathexis.

Power in the contemporary American gender order is referred to as the domination of men and the subordination of women. To understand men's power over women, we must first understand the ways in which men feel women have power over them and men's power relationships with other men. (Connell, 1994, p. 111)

The first power that men perceive women having over them is the power to express emotions. It is well known that in traditional male-female relationships, women are supposed to

express their needs for achievement through the achievements of men. However, it is not widely recognized that the converse is true. In traditional male-female relationships, men experience emotions through women. Subsequently, men learn to depend on women to help express their emotions for them. Consequently, when women withhold and refuse to exercise this expressive power for men's benefit, many men feel contemptible and try harder to get women to play their traditional expressive role. (Fleck, 1992, p. 21)

The second form of power that men attribute to women is masculinity validation power. In traditional masculinity, to experience oneself as masculine requires that women play their prescribed roles of doing the things that make men feel masculine. As with women's expressive power, when women refuse to exercise their masculinity validation power for men, many men feel deprived and frantically attempt to force women back into their accustomed role. An example of masculinity validation is often seen in a traditional couple's household. Men often referred to themselves as "king of the castle" in an attempt to display their masculinity. Additionally, they expect their female partner to validate their masculinity by concurring with this statement. However, when women refuse to validate the statement, men often resort to arguments or physical violence to force women back into the traditional role. (Fleck, 1992, p. 21-22)

Men's dependence on women's power to express men's emotion and to validate men's masculinity has placed heavy burdens on women. For the most part, these are not powers over men that women have wanted to hold. These are powers that men have themselves handed over to women, by defining the male role as being emotionally cool and inexpressive, and as being ultimately validated by heterosexual success. (Pleck, 1992, p. 22)

Now that we have examined men's power over women in relation to the power men perceive women have over them, we must consider the power men have over other men.

Men in different societies choose different grounds on which to rank each other. Men create hierarchies and rankings among themselves according to the criteria of masculinity. Men at each rank of masculinity compete with each other, with whatever resources they have, to maximize their dominant position among men and to ensure the subordination of women. (Pleck, 1992, p. 23) Connell refers to this structural hierarchy as hegemonic masculinity. (Connell, 1994, p. 113) Many societies use the simple fact of age and physical strength to position men within the hierarchy. Our society, reflecting its own particular preoccupations, rank men according to physical strength and athletic ability in the early years, but later in life focuses on success with women and ability to make money. (Pleck, 1992, p. 23)

In our society, one of the most critical rankings among men is the division between heterosexual and homosexual men. This division has powerful negative consequences for gay men and gives straight men privilege. But in addition, this division has a larger symbolic meaning. Our society uses the male heterosexual-homosexual dichotomy as a central symbol for all the ranking for masculinity, for the division on any grounds between males who have power and males that do not. Therefore, any kind of powerlessness or refusal to compete is correlated to that of homosexuality. (Pleck, 1992, p. 23)

The relationship between the subordination of women and competition that men experience among themselves is critical to understanding their desire to remain in a position of power. The competition among men is serious, but its intensity is mitigated by the fact that there is a lowest possible level that men can fall. When men rationalize their misfortunes, they frequently measure themselves to those of lesser ability and power. For example, a graduate student may fail a test. However, he takes comfort in the fact that there were students that received lower scores. Men take great comfort in the number of masculine levels that exist in society and that women traditionally occupy the lowest level. An example of this comfort of multiple levels and women occupying the lowest level can be portrayed when a young male baseball player remarks to other males criticizing his running ability. He responds to the criticism by saying, "I may not be fast, but

at least I don't hit like a girl". The young boy takes comfort in the fact that he is at least more powerful than a girl. It is perhaps for this reason men fear the liberation of women. If women are no longer considered the lowest common denominator, men risk falling to a level lower than ever before. Therefore, from this perspective, it is even more important for men not to allow the emancipation of women.

A third element that is equally as important is the division of labor. Connell indicates that the division of labor at its simplest definition is an allocation of particular types of work to particular categories of people. In the English village studied by the sociologist Pauline Hunt, for instance, it was customary for women to wash the inside of windows, men to wash the outside. Equal attention should be paid to the economic consequences of gender divisions of labor, because the dividend accruing to men are from unequal shares of the products of social labor. This is particularly true under a capitalist economy. A capitalist economy working through a gender division of labor is a gendered accumulation process. So it is not a statistical accident, but a part of the social construction of masculinity, that men and not women control the major corporations and the great private fortunes. (Connell, 1994, pp. 110-111)

This was particularly evident in our society's history when the growing predominance of working-class men in skilled

trades went hand in hand with the construction of masculinity through rites of apprenticeship. Until recently, the exclusion of women from the newspaper industry had been evident since this country's inception. The exclusion of women from the printing business did not occur through extrinsic means such as formal banning. Instead, women were excluded from the printing business by intrinsic methods, more specifically by apprenticeship or lack thereof. Printing in the nineteenth century tended to group three separate activities within the term 'the printing trades', they were bookbinding, paper manufacture and printing itself. Women did establish and maintain a substantial presence in the first two. However, they had been notably absent from printing. Press work was a heavy and dirty occupation which society viewed as work appropriate for men. As Cynthia Cockburn states in her book Brothers, "it would have been an odd family that was willing to see a daughter enter such a male-oriented occupation." The exclusion was inherent in relations between journeymen and apprentices and in the practices that were designed, maintained, and adapted over time to create a close identity of interest among a fraternity of men. (Cockburn, 1983, p. 15)

Our nation also indicated that the primary purpose of wage labor was to support dependents in the home. So while at one

level respectability might be viewed as an "exclusionary principle", it must also be seen as the product of historically specific links between gender identity and the work culture. (Roper and Tosh, 1991, p. 12)

The division of labor between men and women has been predominant in our society since its inception. And although more women are employed within our country's workforce than ever before, dramatic differences still remain between men and women in the areas of wage earnings and executive positions. A Merit System Protection Board report focusing on women employed by the United States Federal Government revealed that over the past two decades, there has been a significant growth in the number of women employed by the Federal Government. The percentage of white-collar, executive branch jobs held by women grew from 41 percent in 1974 to 48 percent in 1990. But while women comprised nearly half of the Federal white-collar workforce, their distribution by grade level and occupation remained disproportionate. Although the numbers of women in midlevel and upper level jobs were increasing, women continued to hold almost two-thirds of the lower grade jobs (GS 1-8). While women hold more of the Government's Professional and Administrative jobs than ever before, they continued to hold 86 percent of the nearly 300,000 clerical jobs. More importantly, women are only one-quarter of the Government's supervisors and only 11 percent of its senior executives. (U.S. MSPB., 1988, p. 36)

As indicated earlier our society measures a man's success in life partly by his ability to obtain wealth. So the accumulation of wealth has become firmly linked to the reproductive arena, through which gender is created. (Connell, 1994, p. 111)

According to Connell, the last structure that contributes to the construction of gender is emotional attachment or as he refers to it, cathexis. Cathexis is specifically centered around those norms pertaining to such emotional attachment as love and hatred or attraction and repulsion. In our society, sexual desire is commonly thought of as being natural. However, in our culture, sexuality is limited, shaped, and repressed through the maturation process that is necessary to meet the demands of the social world. Unlike animals, our sexuality is not simply instinctive, it is individually and socially constructed. By the time a child is five or six years old, the basis for lifelong gender-based social relations has been established. Parents are the primary figures that help construct a child's gender role. As a result of a prolonged maturation process children develop a powerful attachment to their parents. The intense love that children have for their parents is also combined with powerlessness and frustration. This feeling of deprivation is greatly aggravated in a society where the attention parents are able to provide children is limited, where social demands place additional frustration on top of the one already experienced by a child, and where one



or two isolated parents relive and repeat the patterns of their own childhood. Consequently, by the time a child is sufficiently developed physically, emotionally, and intellectually enough to have clearly defined themselves separately from their parents, the parental figures have already been internalized within them. (Kaufman, 1992, p. 34)

The internalization of the objects of love is a selective one that takes place in specific social environments. The environment which most efficiently constructs the hierarchical gender system of society as a whole is the family. Within a traditional family a child begins to understand that the mother is inferior to the father and that women are inferior to man. The fact that this inferiority is not natural but is socially imposed is beyond the understanding of a child. Therefore, a child is presented with two categories of humans. Males who embody the full brilliance and power of humanity, and the females who are looked at as the other or the non-male category. (Kaufman, 1992, p. 35)

Society presents young boys with an ability to escape this feeling of powerlessness. A young boy may feel frustrated early on, but there is hope because as an adult male he has the opportunity to attain power and privilege. But in order to obtain this power, a male must discard the passiveness instilled during his infant years by his mother and embrace the ideology of men. However, a girl discovers early on that she will never possess the power of men. Therefore, the most

she can aspire to is to be loved by a man and in doing so she continues to actively pursue a passive role. (Kaufman, 1992, p. 35)

Emotional relationships play a critical role in the construction of gender. Because human's have the capacity to construct societies and ideologies, cathexis remains a major component of social structure as a whole.

Having looked at the elements that contribute to the construction of gender, we will now focus more specifically on the processes by which masculinity is constructed.

### **C. THE CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY**

Men's lives revolve around three important themes. First, we have adopted a social constructionist perspective. By this we mean that the important fact of men's lives is not that they are biological males, but that they become men. Our sex may be male, but our identity as men is developed through a complex process of interaction with the culture in which we both learn the gender scripts appropriate to our culture, and attempt to modify those scripts to make them more palatable. The second theme follows from the social constructionist perspective. The experience of masculinity is not uniform and universally generalized to all men in our society. Masculinity differs dramatically in our society and there are several variations among men in the construction of masculinity. The third theme is that of a life course prospective. This

prospective is needed to chart the construction of various masculinities in men's lives, and to examine pivotal development or institutional locations during a man's life in which the meaning of masculinity is articulated. (Kimmel and Messner, 1992, p. 9).

The social constructionist perspective argues that the meaning of masculinity is neither transhistorical nor culturally universal, but rather varies from culture to culture and within any one culture over time. Therefore males become men in the United States in a very different way than males in other parts of the world. Men's lives also vary within any one culture over time. The experience of masculinity in today's United States is much different than it was 150 years ago. A perspective that emphasizes the social construction of gender is therefore both historical and comparative. It allows us to explore the ways in which the meanings of gender vary from culture to culture, and how they change within any one culture over historical time. (Kimmel and Messner, 1992, p. 9)

Masculinity also varies within any one society by the various types of cultural groups that compose it. Subcultures are organized around other poles, which are the primary way in which people organize themselves and by which resources are distributed. Men's experiences differ from one another in the ways in which social scientists have identified as the chief structural mechanism along which power and resources are

distributed. In today's United States, masculinity is constructed differently by class culture, by race and ethnicity, and by age. And each of these versions of masculinity modifies the other. (Kimmel and Messner, 1992, p. 9)

All societies have cultural accounts of gender, but not all have the concept masculinity. In its modern usage the term assumes that one's behavior results from the type of person one is. That is to say, an unmasculine person would behave differently: being peaceable rather than violent, conciliatory rather than dominating, hardly able to kick a football, and so forth. This conception clearly presupposes a belief in individual difference and personal agency. (Connell, 1994, p. 103)

Masculinity does not exist except in contrast with femininity. A culture which does not treat women and men as bearers of polarized character types, at least in principle, does not have a concept of masculinity in the modern sense.

Historical research suggests that this was true of European culture itself, before the 18th century. Women were certainly regarded as different from men, but different in the sense of being incomplete or inferior examples of the same character. (Connell, 1994, p. 104)

Having examined how masculinity is constructed, we will now look at sites in which masculinity is reproduced, transmitted, and enforced within our society. Those areas

include, but are not limited to, are: Scouting, Sports, Violence, Homophobia and the transfer of power from one generation to another.

#### D. SITES CONTRIBUTING TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY

Rather than attempting to define masculinity as an object, we need to focus on the processes and relationships through which men and women conduct gendered lives. Masculinity, to the extent the term can be briefly defined at all, is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture. (Connell, 1994, p. 103)

##### 1. Scouting

One place or activity that contributes to the reproduction of masculinity is scouting. In his article The Boy Scouts and the Validation of Masculinity, Jeffrey Hantover explains that Scouting has provided men an opportunity to counteract the perceived feminizing forces of their lives and act according to the traditional masculine script. (Hantover, 1992, p. 123)

During the period 1880 to World war I, supporters of the Scout movement believed that changes in work, the family, and adolescent life threatened the development of manliness among boys and its expression among men. Men felt a great deal of anxiety because they believed the changes happening within

our society would diminish the opportunities for masculine validation and that adolescents would encounter barriers in the process of masculinity development.

Masculine anxiety at the turn of the century was expressed in the accentuation of the physical and assertive side of the male ideal and in the enhanced popularity of gender in social life. The Boy Scouts of America, which received its federal charter in 1916, provide men the opportunity to support an organized effort to make big men of little boys by aiding in the development of manhood. In the early 1900's, manliness was no longer considered the inevitable product of daily life. Urbanization appeared to have removed the conditions for the natural production of manliness. However, the scouting program advertised itself as an environmental substitute for the farm and the frontier. (Hantover, 1992, p. 125) Daniel Carter Beard in his 1914 edition of Boy Scouts of America states,

"the wilderness is gone, the Buckskin Man is gone, the painted Indian has hit the trail over the Great Divide, the hardships and privations of pioneer life which did so much to develop sterling manhood are now but a legend in history, and we must depend upon the Boys Scout Movement to produce the MEN of the future". (Hantover, 1992, p. 127)

The scouting oath was and still is a code of conduct in which scouts swear that they will keep themselves physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight. The action required by the oath, not the uniform or merit badges, makes a boy a scout and distinguishes him from non-scouts. The

intent of the scout code is to produce the ideal man, one that is the master of himself and nature. Additionally, the scout motto "Be Prepared" means being prepared to meet and master danger. In emergencies, it is the scout that is supposed to stand confidently and quiet those who are panic stricken. According to J.E. West's 1912 article "The real Boy Scout",

"the REAL Boy Scout is not a sissy...There is nothing milk and water about him; he is not afraid of the dark...Instead of being a puny, dull, or bookish lad, who dreams and does nothing, he is full of life, energy, enthusiasm, bubbling over with fun, full of ideas and many heroes. He is not hitched to his mother's apronstrings. While he adores his mother, and would do anything to save her from suffering or discomfort, he is self-reliant, sturdy and full of vim." (Hantover, 1992, p. 128)

Adherence to the scout code is a means of producing traditional manliness in boy's clothing.

At the core of scouting lies the scoutmaster who is responsible for training young boys to be masculine. The position of scoutmaster also provides the men who occupy those positions a means of validating their masculinity. Since our society's occupations continues to shift, for the most part, from manual to automated labor, men have less of an opportunity to display their manliness, in a traditional sense, on a daily basis.

According to the historical data, a high percentage of early scoutmasters were clerical workers with high school educations. Although motivational data for joining the scoutmaster program is scarce, the restrictiveness of the

clerical vocation in displaying traditional manly characteristics combined with the later increased admittance of women to the clerical workforce undoubtedly prompted those men to seek a means of validating their masculinity. (Hantover, 1992, p. 129)

Scouting not only satisfied the necessity to train young boy's in masculine ways, it also enabled male leaders to validate their masculinity. Social identities generate the need for self-confirming action.

## **2. Sports**

Another area in which masculinity is reproduced and transmitted is sports. Sports has become one of the central sites in the social production of masculinity in societies characterized by longer schooling and by a decline in the social currency attached to other ways of demonstrating physical prowess. Demonstrating physical and psychological attributes associated with success in athletic contests has now become an important requirement for status in most adolescent and preadolescent male peer groups. Boys who are good at sports have happily profited from this fact and often comes to think of it as natural. Meanwhile, other boys who are small or awkward, scholarly or artistic, get turned off by sports or never really developed an interest in sports, and find other ways to stake their claims to masculinity. (Messner and Sabo, 1990, p. 19)



Influenced by feminist scholarship, women began to develop a critical analysis of male sports, including its effect on women, and of the contributions of male sports to the reproduction of male hegemony in society. The two predominant claims that evolved from this research was first, that sports is named as a male institution, not in the numerical sense that many had pointed to, but in the values and behavioral norms it promotes and ultimately naturalizes, both on the field and in organizational hierarchies. Second, was that the social attention and acclaim that is given to the "male way of being" help confirm patterns of male privilege and female subordination that exists outside sports. This is particularly evident among male professional athletes in our society today. Male professional athletes not only earn huge salaries for competing in their sport, they are also idolized by men, women and children for being tough, aggressive and fearless. Young children and adults read about "male" (not female) professional athletes receiving multi-million dollar contracts and observe the celebrity status bestowed upon such an athlete as Michael Jordan and it reinforces male privilege and female subordination. (Messner and Sabo, 1990, p. 20)

It is argued that learning to use the body in forceful and space-occupying ways through the practice of sports, and learning to associate such behavior with being a man, have for many boys constructed their expectations of themselves in social relationships with women and with other men.

Additionally, it is argued that sports as male preserve has served as an important site in the construction of male solidarity, an institution that encourages men to identify with other men and provides for the regular rehearsal of such identifications. It is proposed that together, these dynamics point to a powerful role for sports in the reproduction of male hegemony. (Messner and Sabo, 1990, p. 20-21)

Becoming a man is something that boys work at. Although this work takes place in the context of considerable pressures from adults and peers alike, a personal way of being a man must be constructed out of each boy's own body and desires. As an adolescent boy tries out different ways of being himself, there is much unsettled about the kind of man he will become. Therefore, an understanding has been developed of the formation of masculine identity that registers the effect of the external pressures and rewards that are constructed by masculinizing practices conducted in schools, by parents, as well as by the less direct influence of many other "normal" role models. (Messner and Sabo, 1990, p. 22)

Socialization practices need to be seen not as natural but rather as collective, mutually reinforced practices through which patterns of empowerment, habits, and self-expectations of domination are encouraged in successive generations of boys, and through which structures of gender relations are thereby reproduced. (Messner and Sabo, 1990, p. 22)

It has been argued that body sense is crucial to the development of male identity. To learn to be a male is to learn to project a physical presence that speaks of latent power. It is in this way that sports are empowering for many young males. Sports teach people how to use their bodies to produce effects and how to achieve power through practiced combinations of force and skill.

Some theorists believe that our sense of who we are is firmly rooted in our experiences of embodiment, and that it is integral to the reproduction of gender relations that boys are encouraged to experience their bodies, and therefore themselves, in forceful, space-occupying, even dominating ways. It may be suggested that masculinizing and feminizing practices associated with the body are at the heart of social construction of masculinity and femininity and this is precisely why sports matter in the total structure of gender relations. Assertiveness and confidence become embodied through the development of strength and skill and through prevailing over opponents in competitive situations. Conversely, the exclusion of women from sports has historically denied girls these kind of formative experiences, with the result that their embodied senses of self were more likely to be awkward, fragile, and timid. (Messner and Sabo, 1990, pp. 23-24)

In today's United States society, sports, arguably, ritualizes aggression and allows it to be linked with

competitive achievement and therefore with masculinity. Sports has become one of the most important sites of masculinizing practice in cultures in which other kinds of physical prowess have become devalued and in which direct aggression is officially illegitimate. However, in order to give other males who do not shine in confrontational team games, the opportunity to make claim to masculinity, other sports have been developed (like racquetball and skateboarding) to broaden the recognized boundaries of masculinity. Although the presence and demonstrable achievements of women in such sports helped to weaken the popular association between sports and masculinity, at the same time our society has continued to place confrontational sports at the pinnacle of our hierarchy of sports as indicated by the wages paid professional football, basketball and baseball players. The acclaim we accord to these men who shine in these sports, means that these games continue to offer important opportunities for masculinizing practices. (Messner and Sabo, 1990, p. 28)

### 3. Violence

Politics of masculinity cannot concern itself only with questions of personal life and identity. It must also address questions of social justice. A structure of inequality on this scale, involving a massive dispossession of social resources, is hard to imagine without violence. It is, overwhelmingly, the dominant gender who hold and use the means

of violence. Men are armed far more often than women. In many countries women have been forbidden to bear or use arms. Domestic violence cases often find abused women who have accepted the abusers' definitions of themselves as incompetent and helpless. (Connell, 1994, p. 119)

Two patterns of violence follow from this situation. First, members of the privileged group use violence to sustain their dominance. Intimidation of women ranges across the spectrum from cat-calling in the street to office harassment to rape and domestic assault to murder by a woman's patriarchal owner, such as a separated husband. Physical attacks are commonly accompanied by verbal abuse of women (whores and bitches, in recent popular music that recommends beating women). The structure of power sustains an ideology of group supremacy. (Connell, 1994, p. 119)

Second, violence becomes important in gender politics among men. Most episodes of major violence (counting military combat, homicide, and armed assault) are transactions among men. Terror is used as a means of drawing boundaries and making exclusions, as in heterosexual violence against gay men. Violence can become a way of claiming or asserting masculinity in group struggles. This is an explosive process when an oppressed group gains the means of violence--as witnessed in the levels of violence among black men in contemporary South Africa and the United States. (Connell, 1994, p. 120)

Violence can be used to enforce a reactionary gender politics, as in the recent fire bombings and murders of abortion service providers in the United States. It must also be said that collective violence among men may open possibilities for change in gender relations. The two global wars this century produced important transitions in women's employment, gender ideology and the formation of homosexual communities. Violence is part of a system of domination, but is at the same time a measure of its imperfection. A thoroughly legitimate hierarchy would have less need to intimidate. The vast changes in gender relations around the globe produce ferociously complex, yet understandable, changes in the conditions of men's practice. Men are not innocent bystanders in this arena of change. They too construct the world of gender relations. Men no more than women are chained to the gender patterns they have inherited. They too can make political choices for a new world of gender relations. Yet those choices are always made in concrete social circumstances, which limit what can be attempted; and the outcomes are not easily controlled. (Connell, 1994, p. 120)

In our society, one belief that is politically sensitive and not easy to change is that to ensure our national defense, we must have the ability to resort to violence. In what has come to be the normal state of emergency of modern life, we grant the state the power to draft young men into the military and to initiate them into the ritual of

violence. Introduction into the armed forces, involves the systematic suppression of individuality for the purpose of instilling discipline. The shaved head, the uniform, the abusive drill instructors, the physical and emotional ordeal of boot camp or plebe summer, are meant to subdue the individuals' will and teach him that the primary virtue of a man is not to think for himself but to obey his superiors, not to listen to his conscience but to follow orders. Like the rites of all warrior societies, it teaches men to value what is tough and to despise what is feminine and tenderhearted. Nowhere so clearly as in the military do we learn the adage that the individual must sacrifice himself to the will of the group as it is represented by the authorities. (Keen, 1991, p. 37)

Although only a minority of men actually serve in the military and fewer still are initiated into the brotherhood of those who have killed, all men are marked by the warfare system and the military virtues. All men wonder: Am I a man? Could I kill? If tested would I prove myself brave? Does it matter whether I have actually killed or risked being killed? Would I be thought more or less of if I had engaged in actual combat? Would I think more or less of myself? What special mystery surrounds the initiated, the veteran? What certification of manhood matches the Purple Heart or the Congressional Medal of Honor? (Keen, 1991, p. 38)

Additionally, since men have historically been linked to violence, it is tempting to place the blame for these actions on biology and conclude that the problem lies in nature's faulty design rather than in men's willingness. But all the explanations that try to support this ignore the obvious. Men are systematically conditioned to endure pain, to kill, and to die in the service of their country. Nothing shapes, informs, and molds men so much as society's demand that they become specialists in the use of power and violence for maintaining national defense. Historically, the major difference between men and women is that men have always been expected to be able to resort to violence when necessary. The capacity and willingness for violence has been central to man's self-definition. The male ego has not been built upon the rational "I think; therefore I am" but upon the irrational "I conquer; therefore I am." (Keen, 1991, p. 36-37)

Men have all been culturally designed with conquest, killing, or dying in mind. Even sissies. Early in life a boy learns that he must be prepared to fight or be called a sissy or girl. Many men who are classified as sissies early on grow up feeling inferior because they did not pass the test of manhood. However, regardless of whether a man passes or flunks the test, the socially designed test still shapes our attitudes and behavior.



Since pornography often depicts violence, some people believe that pornography must also be a site in which men reproduce and enforce the subordination of women. This is not necessarily true.

Anti-pornography feminists have maintained that pornography is violence against women, that the actual depictions of rape and torture involve real women often being filmed against their will. For example Linda Marciano, a pornography actress, claimed she was forced at gunpoint to perform certain sex acts against her will in the movie 'Deep Throat'. In her public testimony to the Minneapolis City Council she told them (during the viewing of the film) "they are watching me being raped." (Hearn and Morgan, 1990, p. 102)

Not only do anti-pornography feminists argue that pornography is violence, they also argue that it causes violence against women. It is said to cause rape and battery, and desensitizes both men and women to the abuse of women so that they become numb to abuse when it is done through sex. (Hearn and Morgan, 1990, p. 102)

Although some social science research has supported the anti-pornography feminist position, others have discovered conflicting results. For example, one experiment, on men, found that exposure to degrading pornography did result in more calloused beliefs about rape and have negative effects on attitudes about women. However, another experiment found that

although there may be short-term increases in callousness to the victimization of women, these effects were not long lasting. (Hearn and Morgan, 1990, p. 103)

However, in another experiment when the aggressive pornographic images were segregated into images of sex alone, sexual violence, and violence alone, the results were enlightening. Researchers found that non-violent sexual images had no noticeable impact on men's attitudes and behaviors, while images of violence and sexualized violence obtained opposite results. From this the researchers concluded that depictions of violence against women, whether or not in a sexually explicit context, should be the focus of concern. (Hearn and Morgan, 1990, p. 103)

#### **4. Homophobia**

One avenue in which our society attempts to maintain the structure of masculinity is with the fear of homophobia. According to Gregory Lehne, the male role is predominantly maintained by men themselves. Men devalue homosexuality, then use homophobia to control other men in their male roles. Since any male could potentially be a homosexual, and since there are certain social sanctions that can be directed against homosexuals, the fear of being labeled a homosexual can be used to ensure that males maintain appropriate male behavior. Homophobia is only incidentally directed against actual homosexuals. It is more commonly directed and used against

heterosexual males. This explains why homophobia is closely related to beliefs about sex-role rigidity, but not to personal experience with homosexuals or to any realistic assessment of homosexuality itself. Homophobia is a threat used by societies and individuals to enforce social conformity in the male role, and to maintain social control. The taunt "What are you, a fag?" is used in many ways to encourage certain types of male behavior and to define the limits of acceptable masculinity. (Kimmel and Messner, 1992, p. 389)

Lehne continues by noting that homosexuals in general constitute an invisible minority that is indistinguishable from the male population in most ways except for sexual preference. Throughout history there has been examples of how homophobia has been used to maintain appropriate masculine behavior. In 1935, Germany made homosexual fantasies illegal and Hitler sent more than 220,000 homosexuals to concentration camps. It is probable that many of the men sent to concentration camps were not homosexual. But during that time period, people were considered guilty until proven innocent. Consequently, false accusations of homosexuality combined with an innocent man's inability to satisfactorily prove that he was not homosexual enabled the German party to do away with many undesirable individuals. Likewise, homosexuality was an accusation during the McCarthy hearings in the 1950's when evidence of Communism was lacking. The strong association of homophobia with authoritarianism means that the potential for

the exploitation of homophobia is very real during times of stress and strong-arm governments. (Lehne, 1992, p. 390)

Homophobia can also be used for the enforcement of appropriate social behavior among women. In general men define and enforce women's role, and those who do not participate in the process may be suspected of being homosexual. The direct use of homophobia to maintain female roles is only necessary in extreme cases, since male power is extensive. But it is sometimes alleged that women who do not submit to men, or who do not marry, or who advocate changes in women's roles, are lesbians. But regardless of whether homophobia is used against men or women, its primary purpose is to ensure social conformity and control by threatening men and women with social sanctions.

### **5. Transfer of Power**

One of the most precarious moments in the reproduction of masculinity is the transfer of power to the succeeding generation, whether it be within the family from father to son, or by apprenticeship in the case of the skilled worker. The key question is whether the son or apprentice takes on the older generation's gender identity without question, or whether they mount a challenge, and if so how. (Roper and Tosh, 1991, p. 17)

The process in which boys become men is complex. Joseph Pleck provides an interesting view of how the rules of traditional masculinity shape the behavior that is expected of boys in our society. In his article "Prisoner of Manliness", Pleck explores a number of popular myths regarding what it takes to be a "real man." Regarding the myth that boys need a father figure when they are growing up in order to become secure men, Pleck sights case studies in which boys reared in fatherless families displayed both high and low signs of masculine behavior. (Pleck, 1992, p. 98)

Believing that some myths may be counterproductive he indicates that those who hold true to strong sex role identity (ie. strong and virile men) may have damaging consequences for men, women, and society. He believes this because the conventional expectations of what it means to be a man are difficult to live up to for all but a few. Consequently, it leads to the self-depreciation of the rest when they do not measure up to the expectation.

Pleck concludes his article discussing a new approach to understanding masculinity and femininity called the sex role strain. In this theory, there is no special need to encourage men and women to take different roles. If women and men do differ biologically in ways that cause different psychological traits, then these differences will be expressed themselves without the help from parents and psychologists anxious about a child's sex role identity. Pleck states, "the

point is not that we have to make men and women the same, but rather, that we do not have to strive so hard to make them different.

By using the methodology discussed in the next chapter, we intend to identify themes through grounded research that explores how masculinity is constructed by and for men in the United States Navy. Like Pleck, our goal is not to make men and women the same, but to inform Naval personnel and others how men's attitudes are socially constructed.

### III. RESEARCH METHODS

#### A. OVERVIEW

The main technique used in this document was indepth interviews (see Appendix A) supplemented by extensive theoretical research and small-group discussions. This was qualitative research, which does not spring from numbers of the organization studied or the people interviewed. Rather it gains what authority it has from the depth of insight made available. Qualitative research is able to approach questions that are not answerable through quantitative means. It is better for seeing relationships, processes and contradictions. As in most research, this study begins analyzing existing theories that attempt to explain the relationships, processes, themes observed and ends by amplifying them with specific insight gained from the interview process. Hopefully, it will add to a general understanding of the process in which masculinity is formed and grows within the military setting.

The sample consisted of 40 male Naval Academy graduates ranging in seniority from Ensign to Commander, representing classes as far back as 1977 and as recent as 1992. Various communities were represented in order to gain a wide variety of professional backgrounds and experiences including

officers from Aviation, Supply Corps, Special Warfare, Civil Engineering Corps, Surface Warfare, Intelligence, and designated as well as non-designated warfare specialists. Appendix B provides the exact breakdown.

## **B. INTERVIEWS**

Forty interviews were conducted over a three month period, each interview lasted approximately two hours. The interview protocol provided in Appendix A was initially developed by previous thesis students and tailored for our use. All interviews were confidential and recorded for verbatim transcription. Confidentiality allowed for a more open discussion of the issues and provided a more realistic data base.

Interviewing is a craft, and in order to be a successful interviewer one has to be something more than a technician. We created technique through interview coaching, practice interviews, which were critiqued, and classroom observation rather than blindly following procedure. Techniques discovered during practice interviews, such as casual conversations with the subject prior to the beginning of an interview, created an open atmosphere which brought out the best in each subject. People simply do not have an equal ability and willingness to verbalize their past and make vivid the details and meaning of their lives. While a good interviewer may be able to bring out the best in subjects, interviewers cannot perform miracles on



people who are not free with their words. Our technique was perfected with every consecutive interview which allowed for increasingly improved data collection. Sharing of interview tactics also enabled us to steepen the learning curve.

One invaluable aspect of our relationship with our subjects was the high degree of experience we brought to the interview. Men are most comfortable exchanging stories with other men with similar backgrounds and experiences. Lieutenant Borrebach is a 1984 graduate of the Naval Academy with ten years of operational Surface and Supply Corps experience as well as three years of staff duty. Lieutenant FitzPatrick is a 1985 graduate of the Naval Academy with nine years of operational fleet experience to include, carrier flying, as well as instructor and flag staff duties.

#### **C. DATA ANALYSIS AND THEME DEVELOPMENT**

The analysis of the data was conducted in a manner to identify common recurring themes from the perspective of male Naval Academy graduates who are currently active duty officers, with respect to woman at the Naval Academy, and current and future integration of women in the military and combat. Techniques described by Glaser and Strauss in The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research, provided guidance for data collection and theory development. The process of data collection is controlled by emerging theory, whether substantive or formal. We began with

a few salient features of masculinity which gave us a beginning foothold on the research, but the relevancy did not emerge until the data was fully collected and analyzed. As themes and related data emerged, developed, and became related, their accumulating interrelations formed an integrated central framework. This core becomes the guide to the further collection and analysis of data. An iterative process between theoretical insights and data resulted in the formulation of numerous common themes.

Themes were first extracted from the data of each individual student separately through indepth analysis of all interviews. The themes were then compared and postulated into recurring themes and are presented in the following chapter.

## **IV. ANALYSIS**

### **A. OVERVIEW**

The analysis of the data in this study yielded 15 prominent themes. These themes are presented along with supporting justifications drawn from the interviews. Each justification is reinforced with interview quotations which exemplify the various opinions of Naval Academy graduates from different communities in the Navy. The first five themes relate to the early socialization of young boys. The next five themes discuss their experiences at the Naval Academy, and the last five themes draw from their work experiences with women in the fleet.

### **B. THEME I: THE DIVISION OF LABOR BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN IS OBSERVED IN THE HOME**

#### **1. Theme**

Boys learn early on that mothers play traditional roles at home and the division of labor between their mothers and fathers is defined by these roles. They also learn gender roles through socialization processes in the family. The division of labor observed in the family is oftentimes characterized by the mother's role as the nurturer and the father's role as the provider.

## 2. Justification

The majority of men interviewed came from traditional family backgrounds and observed the division of labor between their mothers and fathers. Their father's worked primarily outside the home in the male world of business and industry. Mother's work was characterized as secondary to dad's, and consisted of support-related duties such as washing, cleaning, and car pooling to name a few. A Lt. Surface officer (F001) recalled how his mother spent her days at home:

Mom made the lunches, cooked us breakfast, got us dressed and took us to school. If we needed a ride or a car pool she would pick us up from practice in the evening, make dinner, do the wash, get us to bed. It was a very traditional role. (LT, Class of 88)

The home was mom's territory and boys learned to identify femininity with the support and nurturing roles their mothers exhibited at home. Their mothers being at home with the "kids" seemed natural to them. While their fathers had careers outside the home, it was obvious to them that mom's career was raising the family. Many of those interviewed saw their mothers' time spent at home as her "career". An example of this was given by a Naval Aviator (F005):

Family life was traditional, mom and dad. Dad worked, mom did not, other than just some part time jobs along the way. Her main career was in the home the whole time I was growing up and it's still true today. (LCDR, Class of 79)

Although some of those interviewed had working moms, they did not see their mothers' jobs outside the home as careers. Instead, they saw their mothers' efforts as only secondary to their fathers' primary income. Mom's real job was at home taking care of the family, the house, and the kids; dad was the breadwinner. One Lieutenant (F017) reinforced this when he said:

Mom worked on and off as a waitress for a while,...She worked off and on just for extra money, not to pay the bills... Her main job was still at home. (LT, Class of 87)

It can be argued that this officer did not perceive his mother's work as totally necessary, but that which was "nice to have". This type of socialization causes the boys to believe that this type of work is appropriate for all women. Thus he associates professional mastery, competitiveness, and their breadwinning fathers with masculinity. Because his mother's income was secondary to his father's, and was considered supplemental, only when mom was finished with her main duties at home would she pursue a second career, as was the case with an Intelligence officer (F002) who said:

My mother did not work when my sisters were in school and she went back after they were out of grade school so it was more of a traditional family in that regard. When she was done doing the mom stuff she went back to work. (LT, Class of 86)

Some of the mothers worked "off-and-on" if the family needed "extra" money, but again they felt mom's main purpose was to take care of the family at home.

In some extreme cases the roles were much more defined; not only was dad the economic provider but the protector as well. Sometimes these roles deter women from acquiring productive skills, they become stifled by their dependance, as was the case with a Surface Nuclear qualified officer (F008) who said:

My dad is ten years older than my mom, married him when she was 18. He's always taking care of her. She can't take care of herself. She took a driver's test when she was 16 or whatever. She had to parallel park back then; she failed it. She never went back. She can't drive today. She's dependent on him. (LT, Class of 85)

Boys are introduced to the division of labor between men and women at a young age. Although some of their mothers were employed, these officers learned at an early age that mother's jobs were of lesser significance than their father's. Consequently, males form deep seeded opinions of female roles from within their own families. The immense labors of these mothers, who appeared to have no careers, kept their families personal lives in order. Mothers and therefore women, are perceived to work in separate spheres, in the home as supporters, not as professionals with career ambitions and therefore, become economically dependant on their breadwinning husbands. When mother's had careers they also tended to be support-related occupations, such as teachers, secretaries, and nurses. Of the 40 officers interviewed 22 had working mothers and 11 of those 22 were either full time or part-time teachers, three were nurses, three were secretaries, there was

also one waitress, one stewardess, one artist, one postal worker, and one retail employee. The result is boys who grew up in these families came to believe that men occupied jobs requiring skills which they associated with masculinity, and women should perform tasks which better utilize their feminine characteristics. This was further reinforced by a pilot (B007) who said:

I guess I got it growing up... you know guys fight fires and fly jets and girls are nurses and teachers and that's the traditional way society was when I was growing up. (LT, Class of 88)

Boys saw the differences between their mother's jobs and their father's jobs, and further defined what was masculine and what was feminine. Not only was it clear that dad had the important job in the family but it wasn't always clear why "mom" worked or what "mom" did at work. The Ensign in interview (F014) made this apparent when he tried to recall what it was his mother did:

I'm not really sure of her exact job, you know , just a desk job... When my dad was in the Marine Corp, my mom didn't work... she did it to keep herself busy, and also to give her some extra money, I guess. (Ensign, Class of 92)

While dad's job was seen as pertinent, mom's was sometimes seen as convenient; not only financially but in other ways as well. A Surface Officer (F009) saw this as the case with his mother, and said:

When I was younger, she (mom) was a school nurse and stuff. That allowed her to arrange her schedule pretty much to ours, as kids in elementary school. (LCDR, Class of 82)

Not only did it become clear to the officer's interviewed what were masculine jobs and what were feminine jobs but a distinction between what women studied and what men studied was also delineated in the home. If mother's had achieved college educations they were usually in what could be considered less technical fields or nurturing professions such as education or nursing. Many of these stereotypes are passed down from generation to generation and are deeply ingrained as almost law within their families. One officer (B003) recalled what his mother told him when she asked her father about entering into a stereotypical male profession:

My mom wanted to go to law school and interesting in that light her father told her...that was not a role for women. (LT, Class of 85)

Even when a mother occupies what might be considered a stereotypical "father's" job, it is not uncommon for the son to de-emphasize her position in order to justify her participation in it, thus reinforcing, in his mind, male dominance and protecting masculinity. One officer (B001) when mentioning his mother's professional accomplishments was sure to point out what she wasn't when he said:

She was a Physical Therapist aide. She had a degree in physical therapy but was not a doctor. She's actually old fashion. She believes a woman should take care of her kids at home. (LT, Class of 88)



Dad was often times seen as skilled, highly educated; a professional. Fathers' jobs were important jobs, masculine jobs: doctors, engineers, accountants, Marines, Naval Officers, carpenters, they were professionals and supervisors with technical degrees. The types of work appropriate for men provided a clear distinction between that work which was not appropriate for women. After all these were the types of jobs they planned to pursue in the future as powerful masculine men.

Multimedia venues such as television and radio carry advertising campaigns, and regular shows, which further enhance the socialization of young males with regards to work which is appropriate for men and women. The majority of those interviewed grew up while shows such as "Leave it to Beaver", "The Brady Bunch", and others like them which depicted fathers working outside the home and mothers inside the home. Advertising campaigns such as Camel and Marlboro cigarettes depicted men as tough and rugged. These external influences prove to be powerful tools of socialization. This was explicitly stated by numerous officers interviewed. Physical labor was also a common characteristic of jobs which were more appropriate for men, these were "masculine jobs". One officer, a pilot (F003), spoke fondly about his father's abilities, when he stated:

He (dad) was very good with his hands, basically, which allowed him to go from working on boilers, to going back to being a carpenter... He was an aggressive personality kind of guy... (LT, Class of 85)

The perceived normality of the officers interviewed was that men naturally held these positions and achieved technical degrees in order to provide successfully for their families. It was the male's role to do so. It was also not abnormal for those interviewed to have fathers who obtained highly technical advanced degrees, and jobs, one example of this was stated by a Navy LT (B001), who said:

He (his father) went to Dartmouth and was either going to become an electrical engineer or a carpenter... He actually got a degree in EE, a masters and Ph.D. in nuclear engineering. He helped design the first nuclear reactor for the submarine NAUTILUS. (LT, Class of 87)

Within itself, to a greater or lesser extent, the family reflects, reproduces, and recreates the hierarchal gender system of society as a whole. Males form deep seeded opinions of the roles appropriate for men and roles appropriate for women, by observing the division of labor within their family. Fathers' roles helped them define what was masculine, and mothers' roles equally defined what was not.

## C. THEME II: MOTHERS HELP DEFINE FEMININITY

### 1. Theme

The role which mothers assume in the traditional family serves to further define what it is to be masculine and

what it is to be feminine. Within the family the mother dedicates herself to supporting and nurturing services. To allow the father to remain on the job, she assumes daily family responsibilities. Emotional and spiritual expression are also seen as the mother's responsibility within the household.

## **2. Justification**

Femininity is also constructed by the mother and defined by her acts of expression, emotionalism, and tenderness. Boys learned what it was to be feminine through their mothers' nurturing role in the home. This observation of femininity also allows for a more clear understanding of what it was to be masculine. After analyzing the interviews, it became apparent that what the officers saw in their mothers as feminine actions, became to be what they expected in all women and therefore not in men. They frequently spoke of their mothers as "kind-hearted", "forgiving", "tender", "patient", and "supportive". These are some the traits they perceive as necessary to be a mother, and to be feminine. These nurturing qualities, which they observe in their mothers are sometimes mistaken as biological, or instinctive natural qualities. A supply officer (B005) believed that this in fact was the case. When asked what he thought about men raising children, he said:

I think it's not the way nature intended it. I think that females are the ones given the instinctive nurturing instinct and it is something that we (males) have to develop. (CDR, Class of 77)

Another officer (B002) put it this way:

I don't think men have the same patience as females. I think the mother has a special bond between them and their child, more than the male does... I think males don't give quite as good care to kids as mothers do. It's not natural. (LT, Class of 83)

While mother's jobs can be classified as support related, numerous interviewees also recalled the support they received from their mother's came in the way of advice. This advice generally addressed the "soft" aspects of life. This aspect of a boy's life was not masculine and therefore was left for their mothers to manage. Career and ambition were seen as men's domain, and only fathers had the proper tools to address those issues. This phenomena further supported the attitude that women were more able to deal with the "softer", or more precisely, feminine sides of life. A Lieutenant surface officer (F007) made this clear when he said:

Mom's (advise) was more, you know, girls, relationships, you know, social, life-type things; not career and ambition. (LT, Class of 88)

"Mom" is also more apt to be freer to communicate than were their fathers. The expression of emotion in the form of worry, or concern, also was more prevalent in their mothers actions, than in their fathers. The fact that openness, communication, and worry came from their mothers, formed in them the opinion

that these were female traits, and again more clearly defined what was feminine. A NFO (B015), supported this notion when he recalled:

She's (mom) got some good mothering skills. She can have some good heart-to-hearts, stuff like that. I've taken most of my parenting skills from my mother as opposed to my father. He was more of a man's man. (LT, Class of 88)

Many of the officers interviewed stated that their mothers were more expressive with their feelings than their fathers. This fact serves to link emotion and the outward expression of emotion to women and femininity.

Spiritual needs were also provided more often times by their mothers than their fathers. Those officers interviewed who had strong religious backgrounds said it was their mothers who influenced them the most. It was their mother's who they referred to as the "savior" in their house or took care of the spiritual role for the family. It was seen as natural then, that their mother would be director of religious studies at the local church, or volunteer as a religious teacher on Sundays after mass. These appeared to be things that required spiritual traits; what the young boys now saw as feminine traits.

Another trait which became associated with their mother and therefore femininity, was being fragile. It was not unusual to hear the officers refer to their mothers and sisters as "fragile" and in need of protection. This further enhanced men's position of power over women. They saw their

mothers as weak and their fathers as "breadwinners", and themselves as strong and women as vulnerable. One officer (B010) validated this when he said:

I feel you have to protect women, like she's vulnerable. I know it's an antiquated stereotype but it takes time to get over...It's probably old fashioned values from my parents, look out for women. That women are the weaker sex. (LT, Class of 88)

Some officers saw their mother's role was to be submissive to their fathers and came to believe that this was a normal. Men's power over women, displayed in the home, carries a powerful social consequence when observed by a young boy. This role becomes normal to him and serves to further fuel the oppression of women by men. The feminine role is now a submissive one and consequently not masculine. One officer (B003) who had an extremely strong religious upbringing explained his mother's role in their home with regards to what the bible dictated. He said:

She had the spiritual role...there are different roles that they play and my parents follow that to the T... The Bible instructs that the husband is to love their wife and the wife should be submissive to the husband. (LT, Class of 85)

Being "soft", or being "dependant" on anyone else are typically fears associated with men. They are also characteristics which boys see in their mothers, feminine characteristics. The fear of being perceived as feminine or a "sissy" means losing the power position men have over women. "Men are stronger than women", women are "vulnerable", more

"patient", and have "better instinctive mothering skills"; all these are learned socialized stereotypes that young boys take from their mothers into manhood.

**D. THEME III: FATHERS AND FATHER FIGURES HELP DEFINE MASCULINITY**

**1. Theme**

Fathers and father figures play a critical role in shaping young boy's opinions of what it is to be a man. Among the officers interviewed, many discussed how these male influences were instrumental in molding and pivotal in developing their ideals and attitudes at an early age.

**2. Justification**

In the home, young boys learned that it was their fathers or father figures; who they idolized, who tended to make the big decisions, took the more aggressive actions, were strong in personality, and took the more physical role than did their mothers. Dad defined what it was to be masculine through his daily interaction within the home. Adjectives used to describe their fathers included physical, influential, loud, authoritative, and tough. While their mothers defined what it was to be feminine, the direct contrast which they observed in their fathers' actions solidified their socialization as "masculine" men.

Many of the officers interviewed felt that it was their fathers who taught them that mom's place was in the home and dad's place was to provide and protect. If it was dad's role to protect, then it must be manly as well. These lessons weren't always explicitly stated, but one surface officer (B011) recalled:

My father has contributed to how I feel about women in general...The way my father taught me and my brothers was to protect our sister...Dad's place was to protect and provide for the mother and children. (LT, Class of 90)

Fathers sometimes served as role models to their sons, and passed on certain traits and ideals to them. Their son's desire to emulate their fathers characteristics in order to "be like them" proved to emphasize the influential role dad played in shaping their son's value system. These values were perceived as normal male ideals, such as hard work, and honor to name a few. One officer (F008) who stated that he wanted to be like his dad, relayed some of the things he admired in his father, and some things his father taught him, he said:

He (his father) was a tough individual, he treats women with respect...He's the kind of guy that if I got my ass beat or I let someone take my money, and I didn't do anything about it, he'd kick my ass. He said "Some kid beats you up," you know, "you go get a big stick and you beat them up." So he kind of taught me some street fightin' stuff. (LT, Class of 85)

The young boys also learned to be tough and physical from their fathers. Given the behaviors that young boys witness their fathers exhibiting in the home, they tend to associate physicalness, discipline, and sometimes violence as



the essence of masculinity. Fathers make the rules in the home, they are the disciplinarians, the yellers and the screamers. Boys learn these traits from their fathers and use them as vehicles to enhance men's power over women. Control in the home, characterized by the dominance husbands have over submissive wives serves to feed men's need to validate their masculinity. Sons never saw these roles as natural. A LT NFO (F017) remembered how things went in his house; he reflected:

My house was like the Wonder Years. It was dad who made the rules. You took mom kind of serious, but when she said, "I'm going to tell your dad, he's going to kick your butt," he did, Dad made the rules, dad just had to say, "Do it," and grab you by the neck and made you do it. So was I afraid of my dad? Ya. My dad was the enforcer, Pretty simple. (LT, Class of 87)

One officer (B009) who felt his father went to the extreme said:

He (dad) was a violent man. When I was growing up we had physical abuse, you know like beating us around if we jumped out of line. (LT, Class of 87)

Fathers exert greater social control to insure boys grow up male, than that girls grow up female, as can be seen by the fact that greater stigma is placed on the "sissy" boy than the "tom boy" girl. While boys strived to be like their fathers some fathers exerted tremendous amounts of pressure on their sons to perform and achieve. This pressure was displayed in many ways, one Lieutenant (B009) who indicated that his father placed an inordinate amount of pressure and high expectations on him said:

Oh, my dad was very high-pressure oriented. He used to, no kidding, curse from the stands and I knew he was talking to me. So my dad had high expectations my whole life, much higher than my sisters got. He put a lot of pressure on me to perform. (LT, Class of 87)

Reinforcement of their fathers as active, physical, dominators, sometimes came from brothers, who were seen as father figures. The officers who had older brothers, saw in them, the same masculine traits they saw in their fathers. An Intelligence officer (F002) with an older brother who also went to the Naval Academy recalled:

He was five years ahead of me and I was trying to keep up with everything that he accomplished sports wise along the way. (LT, Class of 86)

Another officer (F013) said this about his brother:

We were close. He was our star high school fullback...He paved the way with my parents. I really look up to him. (LTjg, Class of 90)

Whether it was from fathers or father figures, the young boys came to understand what it was to be masculine by observing and mimicking their actions, and echoing their beliefs. Masculinity socialized in the home by fathers through their sons, serves to maintain the power men hold over women. Boys learn to be strong, physical, tough, and in charge, they learn to be "real men", to be masculine, from their fathers.

## E. THEME IV: SPORTS FURTHER SOCIALIZE MASCULINITY IN BOYS

### 1. Theme

Sports provides another means to further obtain a masculine identity. Interaction with teammates and coaches helps reinforce boys' development as gendered personalities.

### 2. Justification

Young boys do not come to their first experiences in organized sports as blank slates, but arrive with already "gendering" identities due to early developmental experiences and previous socialization. The observation of the division of labor between their parents, and the "manly" actions of their fathers reinforces this notion. Sports often provided the first opportunity for boys to learn what they considered important lessons, some being; team work, "to play as a team", "to get along with the other guys", winning, losing, how you play the game, more succinctly put, to be "manly". Many of the officers interviewed were introduced to sports by older brothers and fathers, and once involved, found themselves playing within an exclusively male world. A Surface LTjg (F013) said:

(Sports played a) major role. It really -- the team sport aspect of it, but it really set the tone for me developing. (LTjg, Class of 91)

Sports was often used as a means to "fit in". Some of the officers came from families that were forced to relocate frequently when they were young. As boys they found that

playing sports allowed them to be more readily accepted in their new communities. If they happened to excel in a particular sport acceptance came much more quickly. This was explained by a Lt (F010) who said:

For me, sports -- for a guy who moved around a lot, you always made friends with guys on the team. You know I was, luckily, pretty talented, so quickly I became important to the team and became part of the group, and it was a central focus in my life. I think sports helped me get through. (LT, Class of 86)

Many officers felt that the discipline and goal setting skills they learned through sports at an early age helped guide them through their youth. These were also traits they often saw in their fathers.

All 40 officers interviewed had participated in all male organized sports as children. "It was what we did all the time" was frequently said by those interviewed. They learned the importance of being "physical", "loud", and "dedicated". While they were playing sports the girls were often thought to be off learning their cheerleading routines, or playing dolls, or helping their mothers with bake sales. The differences between males and females, masculinity and femininity, played out on the sporting fields and the sidelines was clear. A helicopter pilot (B006) put it like this:

I think coming from a very typical high school upbringing where the boys played sports and the girls were cheerleaders, it was more a boy-oriented world in high school. (LT, Class of 88)

Statistics gathered from the Naval Academy registrars office indicate that 84 percent of the class of '97 were varsity letter winners in high school, and these figures are commensurate with all other Naval Academy classes.

The attention given to sports and athletes in the media and by society, further increases the importance placed on sports by young boys, and the power they gain over women by their participation is evident and the consequences are real. The family rarely congregates around the TV to view a cheerleading competition, but the weekend ritual of watching male sports has become common place, not to mention the skyrocketing salaries paid to professional male athletes. One officer (B009) recalled how his success made him feel when he said:

I was a typical jock...When I made that group I was a big fish in a small pond. My name was constantly in the newspaper. I got a lot of attention. (LT, Class of 87)

Most of the men in this study spoke fondly about the camaraderie they enjoyed while playing sports. This provided a form of closeness within a group without fear of intimacy. One surface officer said " I liked camaraderie the best, the idea of a bunch of guys out there working towards a common goal". For boys, the development of gender identity involves the construction of positional identities, where a sense of self is solidified through the separation from others. However despite their fears of intimacy, they also retain a human need

for closeness and unity with others. (Kimmel & Messner, 1992, p. 174) Intimacy was seen as a feminine trait and as "jocks" it was unacceptable and disguised as camaraderie. A LT (F001) had this to say about camaraderie:

It was a locker room mentality, you were around guys all the time. I like that environment... We were all very close, we had a lot in common there were no distractions. (LT, Class of 88)

The connotation of "distractions" means from girls, and those also excluded from their all male athletic group, such as non-athletic boys or "wimps". They sought out closeness and found it within their athletic teams. Some of the things they learned within these groups as stated by the officers interviewed were: to "never quit", to "get physical", to learn how to "get used to getting yelled at", all of which lend themselves to masculinity building.

Our society, stratifies men according to physical strength and athletic ability especially in the younger more informative years. This tends to place coaches into very influential roles in the lives of impressionable young boys. Male athletes adopt the visions and values that coaches are offering as well: to take orders, to take pain, to take the game seriously, to take their place on the team, to win. If they can't 'take it' they are seen as wimps or even worse, feminine. This influence was evident when interview B011 had this to say:

I enjoyed hitting people, I enjoyed the pain actually..If I was hurt I felt good about myself if I could gut it out and play regardless of injury. I love the competition and winning..I mean our coach would never hit us or anything like that...It was more psychological...he would try to piss you off, telling us we sucked... I mean during films he would say we hit like girls, things like that. (LTjg, Class of 90)

A few officers saw in their coaches what it was to be a man, One officer (B012) used these words to describe his first baseball coach who he said taught him what it was 'to be a man':

He was fairly gruff, fairly rough, kind of crude individual. He was a real nice guy, I liked him. I looked at him and saw how men acted. (LT, Class of 87)

"Sports are manly", "it was the manly thing", these statements were made repeatedly throughout the course of the interviewees. Coaches seemed to epitomize manliness and utilized many of the skills seen as masculine to the boys. They were the antithesis of femininity. This was something to strive for as a young boy and some found it in their coaches. Here is one example from B011 who said:

My coach was very much a man, and he felt football was a man's sport and if you weren't prepared to play with pain or inflict pain you were a sissy. Football was his life, blood was his war cry. He believed women and sissys had no place on the gridiron. (LT, Class of 90)

Although separation of men and women in sports appears to look natural, it is in fact socially constructed by men in order to preserve their ability to validate their masculinity. By excelling in sports, young boys in our society are rewarded

by being elevated to higher levels within men's hegemonic structure and reinforces their dominance over women. These levels are not always as clear as one officer (B017) recalled:

You put the athletes on a pedestal, and we didn't have the same respect for those who aren't. So if you didn't (play sports) we kind of put everybody into the same pool and kind of like (said) "oh what a bunch of geeks". There was a dividing line between people who were athletes and the geeks. (LT, Class of 88)

Sports was also played for rewards and payoffs. Winning at sports meant winning friends and carving a niche within the male pecking order. It also meant adoration from girls. Numerous officers, who excelled in high school athletics, mentioned they dated cheerleaders and the more popular girls. Sports for young boys was also the primary means of interaction with people other than their immediate family. Those who didn't play had less of an opportunity to gain the attention of others, especially girls. Most often times acceptance was contingent on winning and some officers felt pressure to do so. One officer (B009) who recalled pressure from his father to perform on the field, said:

The pressure from my dad, I mean, it was just odd to me at the time. When I was fifteen or sixteen years old, to have this grown man in the stands, you know, yelling at me to hit somebody or 'Why'd you miss that?', you know, I can just hear him. I don't know, maybe just at times during high school I just felt that I was doing things more for him instead of me. (LT, Class of 87)

Sports serves to shape the identity of young boys as masculine men. Athletes learn "no pain, no gain". This philosophy weaves its way into the lives of male athletes in



two fundamental ways. It stifles men's awareness of their bodies and limits their emotional expression. They learn to ignore personal hurts and injuries because they interfere with the "efficiency" and "goals" of the "team". They become adept at taking the feelings that boil up inside them, feelings of insecurity and stress from striving so hard for success, and channeling them in a bundle of rage which is directed at opponents and enemies (Sabo, 1992 p. 158). Sports is part of a social system predicated on male domination. Through sports, many of the officers learned to "take it", that is to internalize patriarchal values which, in turn, become part of their gender identity, and their view of women.

**F. THEME V: GOING TO THE NAVAL ACADEMY MEANT PRESTIGE AND SUCCESS**

**1. Theme**

Those interviewed had various reasons for attending the Naval Academy but the predominant attractions were the reputation of the school, the prestige they gained by being accepted, both from their family and their friends, and its lack of tuition.

**2. Justification**

An appointment to the Academy meant acceptance from their family and friends as successes, as well as guaranteed employment upon graduation. Part of the mystique was accepting the "challenge" of being morally, mentally and physically

prepared for duty into the sea services. The "whole man principle meant more than an exciting career as a professional, it meant living up to, and exceeding the expectations of their friends and families, most especially their fathers. B008 said:

Some of the things I was expecting: just to be challenged at every step, physically, mentally, you know, pushed... I wanted through it just to, I don't know, prove myself for whatever reason. (LT, Class of 88)

In order to become more familiar it with those interviewed it is important to know that of the 40 officers interviewed in this study, 35% had exposure to the military from within their immediate families. One had a father who was a graduate of the Naval Academy, two had older brothers who attended USNA, and two others had brothers who went to the Air Force Academy. Also ten had fathers who were career military officers of which four were Navy and one was Marine Corps. After graduation from high school, five went on to the Naval Academy prep, while two others went to private foundation schools, funded by the Navy, prior to entering the Academy. It becomes clear that influential forces such as brothers and fathers had a significant impact on the desire to attend the Naval Academy but, what was it that they perceived the Academy would provide them? One recurring sentiment was the attraction to discipline. The type of discipline they saw in and received from their fathers. A surface officer (F001) stated:

My dad knew discipline he believed in it. I was always in a disciplined environment. I enjoyed it and that was one of the reasons the Academy appealed to me. (LT, Class of 88)

Discipline was clearly a trait he learned from his father, a masculine trait. Another officer (F017) said " I was different than my buddies because I grew up with discipline", when asked what made him different than his immediate friends who did not seek an appointment to a service academy. While discipline was something they related to their fathers and therefore masculine, being like their fathers was very important, especially to those who had fathers in the services. Being like their fathers meant achieving everything that came with it, including, retaining the power privilege men hold over women. Becoming the ultimate man, a soldier, a trained killer, the highest ranking in the hegemonic order among men. Another surface officer (F010) whose father was a Navy Captain said:

To be honest with you, I always planned to go in the Navy...as long as I can remember, since I was 7 years old, I was going in the Navy like my dad. My dad's Squadron Commander was a Vietnam Pilot, and he had a couple of Silver Stars, Distinguished Flying Crosses, three combat tours, he showed me around his house and all his albums from the war. I really like him. He was an Academy graduate. A couple other men around my dad, you know, were all Captains, were Academy grads, and I thought the world of them. (LT, Class of 86)

While dad was extremely influential in their decision, older brothers also played an instrumental role in forming favorable opinions towards the Naval Academy in their younger brothers. Four officers whose older brothers went to service Academies spoke of them as "professional", "successful" men

who were "respected". They wanted to achieve the same respect their brothers had achieved. This would mean elevating their status among their male peers and thus their further increasing the power they enjoy over women.

Some of those interviewed made visits to the Academy as young impressionable boys and brought back bright visions of uniformed Midshipmen who symbolized jumping the gap between being a boy and becoming a man. They also recognized the respect and admiration their parents displayed towards the Midshipmen as real. This adoration was realized when they to were accepted as Midshipmen. One officer recalled what his parents said to him upon learning he had been accepted to the Academy:

When I got accepted, My father put me on a pedestal, you know. "You're going to one of the best institutions in the country", so, ya, you're up on a pedestal, "you're great", you know, "you're wonderful", proud of you. (LT, Class of 87)

Two officers who indicated the desire to free themselves from the control their parents had over them reinforced their need to leave boyhood. The first officer whose mother taught in his high school felt many of his successes were wrongly attributed to his mother. What better way to prove he could achieve without the aid of his mother than attend a service Academy? Everyone knew what it took to be accepted, it took the exact things he wanted credit for having achieved on his own; toughness, physicalness, and discipline. He (B003) recalled:

I realized that the best thing I should do is to find a school dedicated to increasing my weak points and one that gave me the room to do other things without people tying my accomplishments to my mother. (LT, Class of 85)

The second officer mentioned he felt the need to break free from the dependance he had on his father. Certainly to be dependant on anyone is not a masculine trait, after all his mother was dependant on his father. He was determined to end the power his father had over him; a feeling many women must cope with every day. "It was manly to be independent", "men are required to be the breadwinners." He saw his way out as an appointment to the Naval Academy. He (B008) put it this way:

I really didn't want to rely on him at all. At a young age I just wanted to be independent from him because it was always really hard to ask him for anything. I certainly didn't want to have to deal with asking him for a college education. I knew I should never depend on him. I wanted to go to the Academy because I'm trying to get away from my father. (LT, Class of 88)

Choosing the Naval Academy meant choosing their occupation and their work which on one hand, denoted the quality of their economic well being. For most of them, their job determines how much money they make, and this in turn affects how well they live. Work also signifies their social status. What they do for a living strongly influences how other people evaluate and rank them. And finally, work affects how they think about themselves. What they do often determines how they feel about who they are (Bernard, 1992, p.207). Their

acceptance into the Naval Academy meant achieving social status, high self-esteem and a chance to demonstrate their manliness.

Many of the officers attended the Academy during the height of the cold war and it is important to point out that some of the interviewees stated patriotic reasons for wanting to attend the Academy. Visions of Tom Cruise, Richard Gier and other Hollywood stars also accompanied the stories for choosing the Naval Academy, but it is important to understand the socialized ideals which the applicants brought with them. They were highly socialized young men seeking to follow the footsteps of their boyhood idols, their brothers, and fathers and in some cases escape the chokeholds their parents had on them. All of these reasons aided them in obtaining their own identity as masculine, and who is more masculine as defined by society than a military officer?

#### **G. THEME VI: SENIOR MALE MIDSHIPMEN REINFORCE GENDER BIAS**

##### **1. Theme**

Although the majority of men entering the Naval Academy have already formed opinions and attitudes regarding women in general, most believed upon entering the Academy that both male and female midshipmen were of equal status. However, soon after their arrival, senior male midshipmen

communicated through various means that female midshipmen were subordinate to male midshipmen and should be treated accordingly.

## 2. Justification

Before entering the Naval Academy, the majority of men interviewed indicated they did not give much thought to the attendance of women at the Academy. Many who had not spoken to male midshipmen or Academy alumni expected a gender neutral environment. One Naval Flight Officer (B010) stated:

I think I was fairly gender neutral going into the Academy. I don't think I gave women being there a whole lot of thought except after attending Boy's State in Maryland which was run by a bunch of Marines. I thought that was kind of tough; getting run around by a bunch of Marines for a week. But it sort of gave me an idea what to expect at the Academy. So the only thing I can remember thinking was 'Hey, that was kind of tough for me, I wonder what it's going to be like for a girl at the Academy? I wondered if they could make it through the same kind of thing. (LT, Class of 88)

Another example given, this time by a Surface Warfare Officer (B013), also substantiates this notion:

I really hadn't even thought about it. I just kind of focused on what the lifestyle would be like. What school would be like. What being a plebe would be like and what my life afterwards, you know, what I would do for the Navy. I hadn't even thought about the male-female question. That goes as well for the questions of 'Should women be there?' None of those things even came into my mind. They weren't even issues to me back then. (LTjg, Class of 91)

This belief of a gender neutral environment remained constant for some of the men interviewed through plebe summer (the period in which all midshipmen are indoctrinated to the

Academy and the military way of life). Some men indicated that the firstclass midshipmen in charge of their plebe summer emphasized that men and women within the military and at the Academy were all part of one team which emphasized gender equality. As one Surface Warfare Officer (B011) put it:

It was stressed during plebe summer that we are a team and every member of the team is an essential link..and if a link is weak, be it a guy or a girl, it was important that we work together as a team to strengthen our weakest link..so the feeling was that if someone needed help whether it be making their rack, doing a chow call or getting over the obstacle course wall...we were to gladly provide our support.  
(LT, Class of 90)

However, after the brigade of midshipmen returned for the start of a new academic year, it was clear, from the interviews, that the older male midshipmen quickly indoctrinate the new men on how women are to be treated at the Naval Academy. The older male midshipmen advised the new male midshipmen of the differences between men and women and reinforced that women were subordinate to the men. As a Surface Warfare Officer (B011) indicated:

Once the brigade got back from summer break, you would see how the brigade, the majority of men, pointed out the differences between the men and the women. For example, I never gave it much thought that the women's physical fitness standards are different than the guys..but the upper class male midshipmen would point out that women are supposedly at the Academy to receive the same training as every other midshipman there, but they would say why was the obstacle course wall lower for women and how come they get more time to run the mile?...I definitely can't attribute (this attitude) to anything prior to the Academy because I never thought that way in high school...I don't think it was self imposed... I would have to say I developed that feeling from being around other male midshipmen



at the Academy...But I don't know why that feeling...you know, insinuating that women shouldn't be at the Academy is passed down from class to class...it probably only a few people that actually feel that way when you enter the Academy...but maybe it gets put on you as a plebe and since you are so junior and impressionable, that you just have to go along with it. (LT, Class of 90)

Another Surface Warfare Officer (B012) described a similar occurrence about the brigade's return. He stated:

Then once the brigade returned and we started getting into the school year, it starting getting more and more ...you could see that there was a difference there; people were treated differently by their classmates, by the Administration, not everybody, it wasn't like an iron thing. It was kind of subtle but it was definitely there. (LT, Class of 87)

The same Surface Warfare Officer (B012) recalled an event in which the Deputy Commandant of midshipmen (a Navy Captain) reinforced the attitude among men that women at the Academy were subordinate to the men. He explained:

My first class year I guess, the Deputy Commandant, heard a lot of guys talking about selection night, and that they hoped that they'd be able to get a Civil Engineering Corps billet or some sort of restricted line billet...He assembled the whole class and said "You know, the reason you come to this place... the whole reason for the Naval Academy is to produce combat warriors and if you want to go to some other field you are here wasting the government's money if your plan was not to come here to lead troops into combat." There was kind of a murmur going around, I think he figured it out and then he said, "but that doesn't apply to the women here; they can't do that, they're not allowed by law to do that. They can go into the Supply Corps and all these other things that you can't, but your job is to train for this", and that kind of really set up something that was already ingrained there in the class by that time. This was half-way through senior year so if it was there it was already there. So that was like the action about it. But that whole perception that, midshipmen are here to

produce combat warriors is accurate because women were prohibited by law from going to combat. So we (men) always had in the back of our mind the question, why are women here? That really pervaded the Academy and there's no good answer. (LT, Class of 87)

Although some officers interviewed indicated that senior midshipmen (and even some senior officers within the Administration) subtly communicated to them that female midshipmen were different, others were not so discreet. One Surface Warfare Officer (B013), who did not have women in his company, stated:

I did notice that, plebe summer, we were all one big team and then academic year, brigade came back. A lot of heavy negative influences came with that. Even though we didn't have females within our year group in our company we were told that the females at the Academy, period, were a bad thing; they shouldn't be there; things like that. So, the big-team concept that they try and teach summer, and is what they were supposed to teach plebe year, kind of broke down a little bit in that sense. (LTjg, Class of 91)

Another Surface Warfare Officer (B013) attempted to isolate at what level within the brigade structure this attitude was perpetuated. He stated:

I think by the time you're a senior, most people are pretty responsible and don't get caught up in telling the plebes that 'Hey, stay away from your female classmates or...that they don't belong'. As second class, the majority of the second class that I knew were at least professional enough to just stick to the basics. I think a lot of that stuff comes from the sophomores that had just gotten done from plebe year and they're still pretty influenced by the upper class telling them this or telling them that and they kind of pass that stuff along. I think the majority of that comes from the sophomores; but, without a doubt, it's sort of supported by the juniors and the seniors as well. (LTjg, Class of 91)

It is clear from the previous statements that a new male midshipmen's attitudes and behavior is greatly influenced by his superiors. Plebe (freshmen) looks at their seniors, in most case, as role models and attempt to mirror their actions so they, too, can be successful. It is through this manner that male attitudes towards women are easily passed on from one generation to another at the Academy.

#### **H. THEME VII: UNWRITTEN RULES EXIST AMONG MEN AT THE NAVAL ACADEMY**

##### **1. Theme**

In order to ensure the subordination of female midshipmen is maintained at the Academy, unwritten rules have been established by men. These unwritten rules are not, in most cases, communicated to women verbally but through symbolic actions (or inactions) of men. Additionally, these rules, for the most part, are revealed to women so they can adjust their behavior accordingly and avoid retribution imposed by the male population. Likewise, these unwritten rules exist for men to enforce the social conformity of a male midshipman. Similarly, if a male midshipmen chooses to break the rules, he opens himself to the possibility of punishment from his male peers.

##### **2. Justification**

Throughout the interviews conducted, officers described similar practices and beliefs which indicated that

an unwritten code regarding the subordination of women existed at the Academy. The first unwritten rule is that male midshipmen should refrain from dating female midshipmen. The majority of the officers interviewed indicated that dating among midshipmen was not looked upon favorably by the male population. Consequently, those males who engaged in that practice were berated by their male peers. A Naval Flight Officer (B009) recalled his experience dating a female midshipman:

As my third class year came along...and I started dating (a female midshipman). I caught a lot of shit from a lot of friends and people from everywhere. Everybody that has ever known you, gives you a lot of grief. I remember a couple of guys I knew were just astonished that I was going out with somebody from the Academy, which, at the time, was horrible. But I used to date her a lot during the week, just be around her during the week and then on the weekend I'd go date civilian girls...So this went on for a long time. Maybe that was part of the reason I could keep some of the heat off with the people saying things...There was definitely a transition, you know, the transition of like 'Holy cow'; I've always been accepted, very popular, then all of a sudden people are giving me shit. (LT, Class of 87)

A Surface Warfare Officer (B020) remembered his experience dating a midshipman:

Sophomore year I actually ended up dating one for about a year. I had...I don't know if it was a falling out but my roommates were very much against it...They made it clear that they opposed it...They just made a lot of jokes and harassed me a lot and stuff like that...I remember they would go through my address book and get the address of my old girlfriend back home. They were writing her and telling her I was dating a female at the Academy...I found out because she sent me a letter and said "Well, I knew we were going to date other people but this is ridiculous"...they were taking letters and notes from

this other girl and they were sending them to her to embarrass me. (LT, Class of 87)

Throughout each interview conducted, men commonly referred to men who dated women at the Academy as WUBA-lovers. Before we analyze the reasons why men at the Academy are given this name, we must first understand what men mean by the term WUBA. A Surface Warfare Officer (B012) interpreted the meaning as follows:

WUBA stood for Work Uniform Blue Alpha, that's its official version. It's a blue uniform we wore to class in the winter months. But it was also used to refer to any female midshipmen. The only ones that really stick out in my mind were like Women with Unusually Big Asses or Women Used By All. There were a lot of other ones. CRUBA was a derivation of that, that was a WUBA who rowed women's crew. You know, once you start calling someone a name like that, even though you could say; Oh, yeah, we're just joking...that definitely sets a tone... even though she's a midshipmen it's something different than you are. You can kind of laugh about it and pass it off as a joke but I think it was still subtly there, saying "Hey, this person is not the same as you". (LT, Class of 87)

Several officers interviewed indicated that male classmates resorted to name calling in an effort to reform those who dated women at the Academy. By labeling a male midshipmen a WUBA-lover, his male classmates were sending him a distinct message that dating, a female midshipman, was considered inappropriate behavior for a male midshipmen. Additionally, by using the term WUBA-lover, male midshipmen are hoping that the peer pressure exerted on a fellow male classmate will be sufficient enough for him to denounce female midshipmen. However, if the verbal harassment men received for dating them

did not persuade them to break off the relationship, there were various methods used to force the male midshipman back into his socially accepted role. One method was to humiliate him. A Surface Warfare Officer (B012) describes a ritual performed at the Academy:

Dating women at the Academy. That was highly frowned upon. It really was. They had a term, it was called Whiskey Lima which stood for Wuba-lover. Wuba-lover was somebody who...I mean, it could be as little as one, you know, if you go out with a girl once you'd say, 'Hey, what are you, a Wuba-lover?' But if you went out with one girl all the time or you dated several Wuba's you were kind of like branded as a 'Whiskey Lima' for the whole time there...There also a little ceremony in which you are branded with the dust brooms at the Academy. If you took off the cloth dust mop, the metal frame was the shape of a "W". What you'd do is that the whole class would get together on Sunday night if a guy went out with a girl that weekend and put shoe polish all over it, black shoe polish. You'd go down to the guy's room, hold him down, pull down his trousers and brand him on his ass with the black shoe polish, 'cause it was a brand "W". Stupid things, very infantile. But it obviously... it was accepted by the upper class. It was Sunday night so there weren't too many officers around. But I never heard of anyone getting caught doing it and getting in trouble. Definitely the upper class accepted it and laughed at it, so that really sent the message down to the plebes that 'these people who are your class mates, really are not', it's almost saying they are not fully human, that 'you should not go out with one of them' and that going out with them makes you a very bad person and 'we're gonna brand you so that you are shunned away from the rest of the school'. So that really sent a down message about it. (LT, Class of 87)

Another tactic used to persuade a male midshipman to stop dating a female midshipman was to ostracize him. A Surface Warfare Officer (B013) conveyed his own experience:

We were a stag company and there was a really heavy attitude that we shouldn't date female mids. So when

I started dating this female midshipman I had a difficult time with those guys. I never went out with them for like two years...It was almost like I was totally blackballed because I had gone out with this female mid. No one ever asked 'Hey, what are you doing this weekend? We've got a big party going on over here' or this or that. On rare occasions it would happen. (LTjg, Class of 91)

However, once a male submitted to the pressures not to date women at the Academy, his peers reinforced his actions by accepting him back into the group as illustrated by Surface Warfare Officer (B013) blackballed above:

At the beginning of the first class year I had to reach out and try to establish relationships with these guys. It was interesting. They were not sure if the relationship had ended. However, once I told them it was over, I started going out with them. First class year was great because we went out and did a lot of things together, and that's what it's all about. It's just like a small wardroom on a ship; it's important to do that. So I was glad that I had a chance to actually catch up with those guys before I left because they're really close friends to me now. (LTjg, Class of 91)

If blackballing a male midshipman was not effective there were other means, such as threats, to convince men to conform. The same Surface Warfare Officer (B013) recalled:

I remember a guy that was dating my girlfriend's roommate remarked that it was hard for him to imagine he would end up dating a female midshipmen because when he was a plebe they were told straight up that 'If I find out if any of you end up dating a WUBA, when you get out of the fleet I'm gonna do this or that or the other thing.' So he remembers that they were very strongly against females in his company and they were told specifically not to date female mids the entire time they were there. I remember him saying that. (LTjg, Class of 91)

By the majority of male midshipmen publicly denouncing dating female midshipmen, they are not only applying pressure to all midshipmen to abide by their rules, they are also sending a clear message to all that female midshipmen are not considered women in the eyes of the male majority.

Another unwritten rule at the Naval Academy among male midshipmen is that no woman is permitted to reach the top of Herndon Monument during the "No More Plebes" ceremony conducted at the beginning of commissioning week. Plebes become fourth-classmen by assembling around the Herndon Monument and boosting one of their class to the top. There the classmate replaces a plebe cover with a midshipmen cover and that signifies the conclusion of plebe year. According to legend, the person placing the cap will become the first Admiral of the class. A Surface Warfare Officer (B011) recalled:

When we were plebes and I'm sure the tradition lives on, that no woman will ever be permitted to take the cover off the top of the Herndon Monument...and I can't see how the administration can ever take that away from the men at the Academy because you need the rest of your classmates to be able to climb on top of each other to reach the top. If a woman even got close we all knew that either the woman was going to be pushed off the top before she can get the cap or the human ladder would collapse...anything to prevent them from getting it...N.P.O.H. "NO PUSSY ON HERNDON" was the saying. (LT, Class of 90)

A Pilot (B007) recollects what happened when he was participating in his ceremony:



I still don't know if any girl has ever gotten to the top of the Herndon Monument to replace the plebe cap for the midshipman cover. I remember when we did it..I remember one girl getting close to the top and either someone grabbed her or threw something at her to make her fall, just so a woman wouldn't replace the cap. I mean, I guess I didn't think that was right to do..but being around the Academy and being around so many people that had those views, I guess maybe some of their views started rubbing off on me to some degree.  
(LT, Class of 88)

Although unwritten rules exist at the Academy, they are not hidden from women. In both examples provided, women were either informed of the laws verbally or by passive/aggressive means (ie. witnessing a WUBA-lover being branded/being thrown off Herndon Monument). By familiarizing women with the male customs at the Academy, men are permitting women to adjust their behavior accordingly to avoid the punishments that go along with breaking the rules. Male midshipmen learn, soon after admittance to the Academy, that the top of Herndon monument is sacred ground, exclusively controlled by men for men. The "No More Plebes" ceremony not only marks the completion of plebe year, it is also a method in which male midshipmen display their masculinity to themselves and those who view the ceremony. Since strength and stamina are necessary requirements of those participating in the ceremony, Herndon monument is an outstanding opportunity for men to display those characteristics frequently associated with being masculine--tough, fearless, and strong. Therefore, if a woman

is permitted to reach the top of Herndon monument, it diminishes the masculinizing significance it has for men as well as jeopardizes the hierarchial status of men at the Academy.

**I. THEME VIII: MALE MIDSHIPMEN EXPECT FEMALE MIDSHIPMEN TO SUPPRESS THEIR FEMININITY AT THE NAVAL ACADEMY**

**1. Theme**

Male midshipmen place a great amount of emphasis on female midshipmen suppressing their femininity and displaying masculine traits. By conforming to this requirement, female midshipmen displayed their subordination to the male population. However, a paradoxical situation existed for women at the Academy. Although they were encouraged to suppress all vestiges of femininity, they had to be cautious not to become too masculine. By going beyond the boundaries established by the male midshipmen, women were likely to be criticized for their behavior by men.

**2. Justification**

To comprehend the enormous amount of pressure there is for women to suppress their femininity, it is helpful to understand what male midshipmen expected of female midshipmen. By asking those officers interviewed to provide examples of good and bad female midshipmen, each officer provided a detailed analysis of what female behavior was socially accepted by men at the Academy. When asked to describe a

female midshipmen that was disliked at the Academy, a Supply Corps Officer (B003) said:

She was very smart, she was an honor student. She was also very quiet...she didn't fit the typical female midshipman mold..I mean a lot of women there look masculine...She was not at all masculine and she caught a lot of grief for not being masculine...She was very quiet and didn't have a lot of friends...She enjoyed dressing up and going out on a date...She enjoyed nice things...like dresses. (LT, Class of 85)

By not looking masculine, the female midshipmen described was verbally harassed. The same officer (B003) tells how he had to protect a female midshipman who was disliked because she was a non-conformist. He stated:

Our Battalion Commander was a female, and I want to say I spent a lot of time protecting her because just about everyone on the staff couldn't stand her because they were jealous of her..she was incredible smart, a Rhodes Scholar candidate... but she had everything going for her..besides the things I mentioned, she was also very attractive..she didn't look like most of the women there..she didn't look like a man. She didn't have a gut and she always looked squared awa . (LT, Class of 85)

In our society, a man who cries in public is frequently looked upon, by other men, as weak and unmanly. However, a women crying is frequently viewed as socially acceptable. At the Naval Academy, crying, whether it be by a man or a woman is socially unacceptable by the male population. This is yet another example of the pressures that are placed on women to suppress their femininity. A Surface Warfare Officer (B011) recalled:

The woman I'm thinking about didn't know her rates and was out of shape and she shouldn't have been there in my opinion...she always cried and couldn't handle the

stress..you always had to cover her ass all the time..she shouldn't have been there...but I saw she didn't have to go through the things we, including the other girl I was talking about, had to go through because she would start crying...so as soon as she started crying the upper class laid off her..I mean what are you suppose to do? Keep screaming at her when she was crying?...she'd stay out there but the upper class would shit on someone else...so after a while it got to be ridiculous, she just couldn't handle the stress and everyone else would have to pay the price. (LT, Class of 90)

It is obvious, from the statements provided above, that those women who were disliked by males at the Academy were unable or unwilling to suppress their femininity. By not altering their appearance or withholding their tears, they exhibiting signs of femininity and were thereby looked down upon by the male midshipmen.

Conversely, when asked to describe a female midshipman that was liked at the Academy, nearly every officers interviewed described women who displayed masculine traits. A Surface Warfare Officer (B001) recalled:

I remember them being like everyone else. They weren't treated specially nor were they singled out. Most of them were just like any guy. They had common sense and new what was expected..we all worked together as plebes. I remember one girl who did not have trouble with academics or rates. She fit in not better..but she was more like one of the guys because she performed better than I did. (LT, Class of 87)

A Supply Corps Officer (B003) described what was appealing about his Company Officer:

I actually had a female company officer who I thought was an outstanding officer..she was a Marine...and although she rubbed some people the wrong way, I thought she always maintained the top standard not

just for women but in the military prospective and in physical fitness she was closer to the men in meeting those type of goals, which she was the only one I really admired. (LT, Class of 85)

Another Supply Corps Officer (B004) described the women that he liked as having the same attitudes and characteristics of his male companions. He recalled:

They were outgoing and we had a lot in common..I was used to going out with them and partying and hanging out...I really wasn't interested in working too hard at the Academy and the women I was friends with basically had the same attitudes. The other women that I didn't associate with were the quiet ones and didn't want to party. But I never looked at the women I was close to in a professional way...I look at them as drinking buddies... I was more interested in raising hell..I never looked at the girls I went out drinking with as...if I didn't want them at the Academy..because I was glad they were there...if I thought that way I probably would not have been associated with them...I can think of one..she was an excellent athlete..she worked hard at her school work..she was a good friend..you know if you told her something she would stick by you..that type of thing..Any of the aspects I would look for in a good friend that was male at the Academy..But she was a hard worker..but I can remember she always stuck to it and that's why she was such a good student and athlete. (LT, Class of 84)

A Surface Warfare Officer (B012) described the women he liked as those who understood their limitations within the male-dominated society. He stated:

The good women, I'd say this is even for the vast majority, not just the top of the class being good. The majority of the women there who were good seemed to understand where they were, what their limitations were, and what they could do. If they weren't an academic star they didn't act like they were an academic star and expect their sex to get them the grades, or with sports, the same thing, or performance evaluations. They really understood how well they could do and they did it well. They understood what their job was and they did it well. (LT, Class of 87)

A Naval Flight Officer (B015) indicated that the women that were liked were those that could party and act masculine. He explained:

I thought, in my company they melded well with all the guys. They were fun. They partied with us and stuff...There was this one gal. She was actually Secretary of our class so she was pretty popular...She was bright. I don't know. She fit in real well. She was a good friend. She was almost like....I want to say 'being one the boys', because it's mostly boys. She was friends with all the guys in the company and got along real well with her. Her roommate was the same way. She was like a stud swimmer on the girls' swim team. In fact, her roommate was captain of the girls' swimming team. I guess these two girls both had....you were asking about leadership positions, it didn't come out then but the one being the captain of the swim team, I guess that's a leadership position and her roommate being Secretary of our class is kind of another one; it's not really a striper thing but definitely popularity or something. Maybe that had something to do with how we felt about them but I don't really think so; I think they were just nice people so they got along. (LT, Class of 88)

It is obvious, from the statements provided, that those women who were liked by male midshipmen were able and willing to suppress their femininity in an attempt to gain the acceptance of their male classmates.

However, suppressing one's femininity and displaying masculine traits does not guarantee female midshipmen acceptance among men. If a women goes beyond the boundaries established by the male population, they are likely to be criticized for their behavior by men. One Surface Warfare Officer (B014) recalled:

Well, it's kind of funny. It's funny how some stuff works there where guys can be sitting around and

talking about, like a date that they were out on and how far they got with this girl or something and then there's a girl sitting there listening to it and then she'll start talking about how far she got with a guy on a date. The way I was brought up, we never talked about that stuff in front of girls for one thing, and then I never heard girls talk like that, to be so free with their thoughts in front of guys like that. I just remember one situation. I was a plebe and I was talking to this girl who was from New York. She had asked me some things about my girlfriend. I don't know how we got on the topic, but she told me that she could tell how if a guy was on drugs by the way his semen tasted. I couldn't believe that! It completely shocked me that a girl was telling me this. A story like that from a guy, something like that, that personal with a guy, I was used to but I had never encountered something like that from a girl. That really surprised me. (LTjg, Class of 91)

Although the majority of the officers interviewed indicated that most of the women at the Academy displayed masculine traits, very few seemed aware of the pressure that men placed on women at the Academy to conform to the expected role. One Officer, a Pilot (B007), remembered:

I would have to say in general that most women at the Academy acted masculine..I mean maybe there was pressure at the Academy to act like that. I felt that they had a problem fitting in there so in order to compensate for that, they would do everything they could to try to fit in with the guys..And I couldn't understand why they would want to do that..I could understand why they wanted to be an officer or go to the Academy..but I couldn't understand why they would want to do stupid things like guys did just to fit in. I just thought that was kind of dumb..maybe I am expecting too much of women or something..I don't know..why would I expect that they would have higher standards than men but it seemed to me they were lowering themselves to what the status quo was....I heard stories about girls there getting drunk and sleeping with some guy..and for a guy at the Academy that was no big deal..but if a girl did it, it would be throughout the brigade the next day. (LT, Class of 88)

Another Naval Flight Officer (B009) stated:

I think that there's a tendency for the women to try to overcome some type of inadequacies. Like, maybe sometimes they don't feel accepted by their peers that are going to school and I think that in order to show that they're a part of the group, that sometimes they are a little overzealous in trying to show that. Some of them make it a point to just stop a plebe and ask him ranks in front of everybody to say 'I'm one of the people, I'm one of the peers in your group and I want to be viewed that way.' (LT, Class of 87)

From the statements made by the officers interviewed, it appears that most men were oblivious to the pressure men placed on women to suppress their femininity. This does not come as a surprise. Ever since the induction of women to the Academy, women have been pressured to suppress their femininity. In a July 7, 1976 Washington Post article entitled "Females Just 'Guys' at Navy Academy" midshipman first class John W. Smith is quoted as saying to his squad of 12 plebes, which included two females, "There are no females here." The author of the article, Karen DeYoung, referring to the first female midshipmen, wrote, "If today was any indication of how the next four years will go for them, they may even start to think they are guys." Even DeYoung, a journalist, seems aware of the enormous pressure on female midshipmen to suppress their femininity. We should not be surprised that this pressure continues today. The behavior and attitudes of men at the Academy are constructed, enforced and reproduced through



socialization and appear natural. Consequently, since their actions seem normal, men are unaware they are suppressing the femininity of their female classmates.

**J. THEME IX: A PREDOMINANT FEELING EXISTS AMONG MEN AT THE ACADEMY THAT WOMEN RECEIVE PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT**

**1. Theme**

Many men at the Academy believe that a double standard existed within the Administration which favored women over men. Male midshipmen believe this dual standard was particularly evident when the administration enforced policy in the areas of academics, honor, conduct and physical fitness. This double standard resulted in considerable resentment towards women by men at the Academy.

**2. Justification**

Throughout the interviews conducted, nearly every Officer remembered a specific example which reinforced that a double standard existed within the Administration regarding male and female midshipmen. Many felt that the academic standards were rigid for men but were frequently relaxed for women to ensure a sufficient number of women graduated. A Naval Flight Officer (B010) recalled:

There were also incidents when it seemed.....for instance, women that had poorer grade point averages than guys. It seemed as a statistical-kind of thing that a woman could get through there with a lower grade point average than a guy could because they didn't want to throw women out. There weren't a whole lot of women there to start with and if they threw them all out for academics then there wouldn't be any

left. And that was kind of the feeling that we had, that women could get away with more than guys. That tended to add to the negative feeling. (LT, Class of 88)

A Surface Warfare Officer (B012) remembered two midshipmen from his company who appeared before the academic board. He said:

Another instance of a woman receiving preferential treatment was after the first semester, my second class year. Two people from my company went to Academic boards. One of them was a guy, he was an E.E. major; his cumulative Quality Point Rating, was about a 2.2 at the time. This was his first semester ever under 2.0. He had a 1.75 that semester, in one of the hardest curriculums at the Academy. The other person was a female midshipmen. This was her fifth semester there. I think this was either her third or fourth Academic Board. Her cumulative QPR was well below 2.0. I think her grade that quarter was a 1.5 and she was an Economics major, which is one of the easiest majors at the Academy. They went to the same Academic Board, the same officers sitting on it, and they got about the same recommendation from my Company officer. I knew they were about equal in their performance. The Academic Board elected to keep her and dismissed him. If you took two people, laid those two folders down side-by-side, omitted every reference to sex on there, and said 'You need to kick one of these two people out; which one are you going to kick out?', there'd be no doubt which one you would kick out; it would have been her. There was no reason on earth that she should be retained while he wasn't. But she was. There were a lot of times that women seemed to get special treatment. Things weren't as hard for them. They could just kind of, you know, get by with it. (LT, Class of 87)

According to a 1993 GAO report, the Academic Board during the period 1988 to 1991 dismissed academically deficient women at a lower rate than academically deficient men. According to the report, 26 percent of the men that appeared before the Academic Board were dismissed compared to 20 percent of the

women. (GAO, 1993, p. 30) These figures further substantiate the officers' claims that a double standard exists at the Academy.

However, academics was not the only area in which men felt women received preferential treatment from the administration. Many believed that punishment for honor offenses, were extremely lenient for women. When a midshipman is accused of a honor violation, the midshipman appears before a Honor Board which is comprised of his or her peers. The Honor Board examines the evidence and determines whether the accused is guilty or innocent. If a midshipman is found guilty, it is the Honor Board's responsibility to recommend the punishment to the Commandant of Midshipmen. Typically, the punishment for committing an honor violation at the Academy is dismissal. If a midshipman is recommended for dismissal, the Commandant or higher authority (up to the Secretary of the Navy) has the power to reduce the punishment and retain the individual. Although the 1993 GAO report does not specify the amount of male or female midshipmen that were retained after receiving a recommendation of dismissal from the Honor Board, most men interviewed believed that the percentages favored retaining female midshipmen. A Pilot (B017) recalled an incident involving a female midshipman:

One of them supposedly went on emergency leave and two weeks later was back and a company officer was in her room doing room inspection and saw some pictures on her desk. Looked at the dates, the dates for the pictures matched up with the emergency leave period

and instead of being in this state with her dying grandmother, she was in another state with her boyfriend on a little vacation. So she got put up for a honor offense. Went to an Honor board and was found guilty by the board...She then went before the chain of command and basically said, "O.K. Well, if you kick me out I'm gonna go to the Washington Post with this list of the married officers that I slept with on the yard patrol cruise last summer.." She ended up not getting kicked out; got reinstated; didn't get kicked out. She was removed from our company and put in another company. And she graduated. (LT, Class of 88)

A Surface Warfare Officer (B012) recalls the same incident:

She got a message saying her grandmother died, so she went on emergency leave to go to the funeral and everything. She comes back a couple weeks later and she's got these pictures on her desk of her and her boyfriend cavorting in the sun that her roommate had never seen before. I can't remember if the date was on them or something but it was during the time that she was supposed to be at her grandmother's funeral. What happened was that she had taken off, they had arranged this, and then when her boyfriend, he went to another college, had spring break they pulled this little scheme and she took off and spent the spring break with him in Florida. She did that and then I think her roommate turned her in or somehow she was put up for the honor offense, found guilty at the honor board; honor board sent her up to the Commandant recommending separation. She then told the Commandant that she had slept with this one Lieutenant on YP crews and that if she was kicked out she would go to the Washington Post with this story and talk to them about, like sex between officers and midshipmen, and basically bring a big scandal. Of course, the Administration folded like a cheap card chair and they just said 'O.K., you can stay' and she eventually graduated with us. We hissed her at graduation, the whole class did. She really didn't deserve to graduate, she had broken the rules. It seems inconceivable to me that if a guy had pulled a stunt like that...he'd be out of the fleet, in a heartbeat but she was allowed to graduate. (LT, Class of 87)

Many of the Officers interviewed also believed women received preferential treatment in sexual misconduct offenses. A Supply Corps Officer (B003) recalled:

One got kicked out because of a sex offense and a year later was readmitted and later allowed to graduate. The guys weren't allowed to come back...I think that was terrible...Another example of a different standard was the issue of gays in the military. It used to be when people got caught..It used to take women forever to get processed if they were determine to be homosexual..but if it were a guy he would be gone that same afternoon...I mean those guys were gone..I remember a classmate of mine..I mean it was a major shock..but he was gone as soon as he was confronted and confessed. Whereas the women take forever..I remember a girl in my class..the administration kept on asking her if she was sure, are you sure..even when they had hard evidence..they had letters she had written indicating her sexual preference. I mean that's unfair. (LT, Class of 85)

A Naval Flight Officer (B015) indicated that as a result of the high attrition rate of women in his class, female midshipmen were free to commit serious infractions without the fear of retribution. He imparted his sentiments:

That's one thing that I kind of felt negative towards because it seemed like they just wanted to meet a quota.....not exactly a quota but they didn't want to keep kicking girls out because it was gonna look bad so it seemed like they were gonna let girls stay at the Academy even if they committed a serious offense. There were some girls, I can't remember what their offense was, but the administration just let them get away with murder and allow them to graduate. Whereas if a guy committed an equivalent offense he would have been gone. I thought that was kind of shady. (LT, Class of 88)

Although nearly every officer interviewed expressed resentment about the double standards which exists in the areas of academics, honor, and conduct, the strongest sentiments involving a dual standard was voiced in the area of physical fitness. Many men felt that by the administration lowering the physical readiness standards for women, the

administration was agreeing that male and female midshipmen were not equal and that women were entitled to favorable treatment. A Pilot (B006) shared his disgust with the women's physical readiness standards:

I had a problem with the fact that it seemed like some of the physical requirements were more lenient in terms of the girls than they were the guys...If a girl failed, there was more leniency...the following semester she would get to stay in school to try and rectify it as opposed to some guys that perhaps failed, or would she get to graduate as opposed to some guy. I was really upset because I remember a buddy of mine who fell out of a fourth story window at the Academy and busted himself all up. He fought his way back to where he had a clubbed foot. He was extremely smart, he was an engineering major and had like a 3.4 or so. I thought that the Navy could have made great use of him in the Civil Engineering Corps or something like that, an engineer, really smart kid. But instead they chose to NPQ (Not Physically Qualify) him. I mean not just for flying and that, they NPQ'd him, they kicked him out of school. And I'm thinking to myself; Well, you've got girls, and in some cases guys probably, but you do have girls too that aren't passing the physical requirements anyway and they have no disabilities whatsoever; why don't you kick them out of school? They might not be as academically smart or as gifted to help the Navy in the future as he was.' I remember when that happened, I was really upset over that and if I had anyway to do anything about it...I would have made a stink about it somehow. Not having any kind of pull like that, there was nothing I could do. Yeah, they ended up kicking him out. It was a crying shame, it really was. (LT, Class of 84)

A Supply Corps Officer (B005) who was a senior when the first women were admitted to the Naval Academy recalled:

Physical fitness standards were definitely lowered in my opinion, for women. Obviously, they were allowed seven minutes to run a mile where we had to run a mile in six minutes and thirty seconds. They did different kind of push-ups. They did different kind of sit-ups. The eight-foot wall was lowered to six feet for them. There were definite physical differences. They had

different sports than the men did. They had individual sports for the women. I think that probably caused more of an impact than academically. Academically the women always did well, in comparison. The women's average was higher than the men's average. They had fewer to select out of a large group so the women were necessarily, because there were fewer of them, able to attain a higher level of academic average. That I don't think bothered anybody; as well as it was probably expected that they would do better. Probably the biggest impact would be in the physical fitness requirement. If a midshipman was challenged by those physical fitness requirements, and then to see those relaxed for women, then there might have been a feeling of anxiety. (CDR, Class of 77)

By the statements noted above, it is obvious that a great deal of bitterness existed among the men interviewed as a result of the double standards perpetuated at Naval Academy. Many officers interviewed felt resentful towards the Naval Academy administration because they felt that the administration promoted double standards by assigning perceptually more stringent standards and punishments on men than women. Consequently, as a result of the power structure that existed, male midshipmen were unable to relay their frustration to their superiors. Therefore, they harbored their bitterness and as a result developed a resentment towards female midshipmen.

**K. THEME X: RESENTMENT EXISTS TOWARDS WOMEN IN POSITIONS OF POWER**

**1. Theme**

All midshipmen at the Naval Academy are encouraged to participate in varsity athletics and to compete for leadership positions within the brigade. However, there exists, among

male midshipmen, a considerable amount of resentment against women who are acknowledged in these areas.

## 2. Justification

Several officers interviewed displayed considerable bitterness towards those female midshipmen who achieved varsity letters in sports that were considered non-physical. Many men believed that women were undeserving of their varsity letter and by wearing a letter sweater for a sport such as fencing, it lessened the significance of a men's letter sweater. This was particularly evident among those men interviewed who achieved a varsity letter in a contact sport, such as rugby. A Naval Flight Officer (B009) explained:

I think a lot of guys resented it...I wouldn't say I resented it, but I wouldn't say I never thought about it either, when I was busting my butt to get my rugby letter that there were these plebe girls walking around with their letter sweater in fencing. Where it's just the sheer numbers that they had so many women varsity sports and they had to fill them. So I think there was a lot of resentment. I think there were guys who resented the girls for having letter sweaters and given a privilege for something that they may have thought they didn't deserve. (LT, Class of 87)

A Pilot (B007) attempts to explain why it is easier for women to letter at the Academy. He stated:

There was also a lot of resentment over how easy it was for women to play varsity sports... Since there was fewer women, it was easier to earn a spot on a woman's team since there was less competition and they needed to fill the slots to be able to play. Whereas for the guys, there was so many guys...just by sheer numbers you knew you had to be very good to be able to make the cut on a varsity team. So for the women it was much easier...Guys would always say, god look at



all these girls with letter sweaters and stuff and what the heck that's not fair to us guys. So the feeling was that many of the women got varsity letters because there was just an available slot that had to be filled...and that not all women with varsity letters were deserving of them. (LT, Class of 88)

A Surface Warfare Officer (B012) illustrated how the achievements of women were discounted and passed off as jokes.

He stated:

Every girl in my company, in my class had a letter sweater. There were eight. I bet, if you looked at the statistics that you would see somewhere between 75% or more of the women who graduated from the Academy have a letter sweater. That just doesn't make sense because they're not any better athletes. I mean, I think in my class something like 88% of the people were high school lettermen. There's obviously a different standard..... I don't think they make it any easier but there are so many sports available that you'd have to go out of your way not to get a letter sweater there. The joke was that they issued it to women when they got their white works plebe summer, you know, your box issue letter sweater. That was a little thing. But you look at it and every woman you see is walking around with a letter sweater and very few of the guys are, I don't know how many people, maybe 10%, 20% lettered. Yeah, you know, that really stuck in the craw of a frustrated (male) athlete who lettered in high school. You would have liked to have played varsity sports here if you could have but you just couldn't do it. (LT, Class of 87)

Additionally, many of the men interviewed exhibited dissatisfaction with female midshipmen who achieved positions of leadership within the brigade of midshipmen. A Surface Warfare Officer (B001) said:

About women getting positions of authority...we always knew they got it for being female, and even one admitted she had gotten a three striper billet because she was a female. She said the only reason I've got this job is not because of my performance but because I'm a female...she got it because she was a girl not

because of her merits...So we agreed with her...I had no reason not to disagree with her. (LT, Class of 87)

Some of the officers interviewed indicated that male midshipmen would mock women in leadership positions to discredit their authority. A Pilot (B006) recalled an incident involving a female midshipman, who was the Deputy Brigade Commander (the second highest ranking midshipman) and a unidentified male midshipman at noon meal. He stated:

I remember that she would sometimes call the brigade to order at meals...The brigade would all be silent and you would hear a mock female voice yelling in the background when she would say "Brigade, Atten-Hut!" as opposed to when the actual Brigade Commander (who was male) would do it. (LT, Class of 84)

Some men felt that women received favorable consideration by the Administration when competing against men for leadership positions within the brigade. A Naval Flight Officer (B010) stated:

As far as leadership positions go, there was probably also, and this is my opinion that women could, again, get elevated to a higher leadership position because they were a woman. That's not to say that a woman who did a terrible job would end up being a brigade commander or something like that. However, given two people who were doing fairly well, if the guy was doing a little bit better than the woman, the woman might still get the job was kind of the opinion. They would get a little bit of special treatment as far as getting leadership positions. (LT, Class of 88)

One of the officers interviewed even expressed fear in women being appointed to the top midshipman leadership position at the Academy. This Surface Warfare Officer (B011) explained:

I guess I do remember thinking to myself when I was there, saying "boy I sure hope we don't have a female

brigade commander while I'm here"...One of the large fears for me back then was that the administration was going to make a woman a Brigade Commander who really didn't have the credentials to be in that position and she was going to get the job because the administration was under pressure to put a woman in that position. I was definitely concerned...as was many others. (LT, Class of 90)

It is obvious why male midshipmen resented as well as feared women who earned varsity letters and obtained leadership positions at the Academy. These women were not only invading the proving grounds of masculinity, they were also threatening men's hierarchial structure. The competition among men is very serious. Nonetheless, its intensity is mitigated by the fact that women occupy the lowest position. However, if women attain varsity letters as well as leadership positions over men, men no longer are sheltered from the lowest position. Therefore, in order to convince themselves they are still superior to women, male midshipmen must discredit women's achievements.

**L. THEME XI: MEN DISCOVER THEY ARE UNPREPARED TO INTERACT WITH WOMEN IN THE FLEET**

**1. Theme**

Since men are taught that women are inferior to them at the Academy, many men have a difficulty interacting with women once they graduate. This is particularly evident when dealing with women who are not Naval Academy graduates. It is unlikely that women who are not Academy graduates were exposed to such intense pressure to suppress their femininity.

Therefore, they do not feel the need to submit to the expectations of male Academy graduates. Consequently, some male Naval Academy are unprepared to interact with women outside the Academy environment.

## 2. Justification

Several officers interviewed mentioned that they felt uncomfortable interacting with female officers and female government personnel once they graduated from the Naval Academy. Many seemed uneasy just pondering over what it will be like to work with women in the future. Additionally, some of the men interviewed indicated that their career path restricted them from working with women since leaving the Academy. This was particularly evident within communities such as special warfare, surface warfare and aviation. Others recalled instances in which male classmates had difficulty adjusting to women in an operational environment. A Supply Corps Officer (B004) described an incident in which a fellow male Academy graduate had problems associating with civilian women within his command. He stated:

I remember a guy that was an Academy grad who was using the phrase "Babe" addressing some of the women and it really pissed the women off...they were extremely upset and ready to bring him up on charges if it continued...The guy, much like myself, had been in an all-male environment too long, and didn't find out where the line was until he had crossed it...so he learned the hard way and for his two year...some of the women that could have made his job easier...by helping him out of troubled spots didn't because he had stepped over the line. (LT, Class of 84)

The same Supply Corps Officer, when asked if the officer's treatment of women, in this instance, could be related to his training at the Naval Academy. He stated:

That's probably the start of that attitude..then they go to an all-male ship and when they finally get to a shore command that has women...that attitude has probably been festering for all that time and it's tough after about eight years to break from that mold. I think that's probably what happened to him but I don't know for sure.

Another officer, a Pilot (B007), was asked, "When you graduated from the Academy were you prepared to work with women in an operational environment?" He explained:

I think the Academy didn't really prepare me to interact with people since everything there was so spoon fed to us. It was difficult adjusting to being on my own after graduation, although it came back to me pretty fast..I still remember having a lot of anger built up inside about the administration not treating us like adults. I mean the Academy was such an artificial world. (LT, Class of 88)

Since male midshipman are taught early on to assume the oppressor role towards women at the Academy, it is extremely difficult for most men to adjust their behavior to conform to the social expectations of their new environment. Some men, once they leave the confines of the Academy, realize that the attitudes and behavior once accepted within the social confines of the Academy are no longer accepted in their new surroundings. However, others as previously indicated are isolated within male-only communities and encounter great difficulty once they are injected into a integrated environment. But regardless of the length of time, male Naval

Academy graduates are isolated from working with women operationally, it is obvious there is some anxiety and discomfort associated with the transition.

**M. THEME XII: SEXUAL HARASSMENT ISSUES INCREASE MEN'S BITTERNESS TOWARDS WOMEN**

**1. Theme**

Several officers interviewed indicated that sexual harassment has become such a heated issue, that they have consciously altered their interaction with women to the point that they now avoid female Naval personnel to the maximum extent possible. As a result of the increased emphasis placed on squelching sexual harassment in the Navy, many officers exhibit a great deal of bitterness towards women in the Navy.

**2. Justification**

The molestation and acts of indecency that occurred at the 35th Annual Tailhook Symposium in Las Vegas in September 1991 and the official responses to those acts have been the subject of extensive press coverage, Congressional scrutiny, and public outrage for the past 30 months. As a result of this incident, the Navy has promulgated an endless amount of messages reiterating the zero tolerance policy regarding sexual harassment. Although these messages were clearly intended to send a strong statement to Naval personnel that sexual harassment will not be tolerated and offenders will be severely punished, it has created a highly sensitive

environment in which men feel hyper-vigilant in relation to women in the Navy. As a result of this transformation, many men have changed the way they approach women and in some circumstances avoid them all together. Additionally, some men express a genuine fear that they will be wrongly accused by women of sexual harassment. This concern combined with a drastic cultural change has created a great deal of bitterness among men towards women.

Several men displayed anxiety over the fact that women would use this highly sensitive issue to their advantage to obtain power. As a result of this behavior modification and the fear that is associated with the sexual harassment problem, some men have developed a great deal of animosity towards women. A Supply Corps Officer (B005) described today's environment as:

I think as a society we have become overly sensitive about gender, about ethnic division, about age division, about everything. We take everything to its most absurd definition and we try to put bigoted connotations around everything. And I think as a society we've gotten too politically correct. I think it's a trend. But it's something that we have to live with while it's here, we have no choice. At the risk of our career we can't be labeled a bigot...There's definitely been a change in society...the pendulum has swung (to the point where) woman will be believed before the man is, in my opinion, without other corroborating witnesses...I know men know that it makes the job tougher but it certainly makes you think about things that you shouldn't have to think about. So it might clutter one's mind with what should be trivial thoughts when you should be thinking more about your job. It certainly makes you think about things. (CDR, Class of 77)

Some men interviewed felt that the emphasis placed on sexual harassment has given women new power over men. This is extremely disconcerting to men since it threatens men's hegemonic status as well as inhibits them from validating their masculinity. If women obtain power, they will be less likely to validate a man's masculinity by assuming a subservient role. If this happens, many men will feel deprived and even resentful because they will be unable to validate their masculinity by traditional means. A Pilot (B006) imparted his sentiments with regard to the sexual harassment issue within the Navy. He stated:

I think that this whole sexual harassment thing gives somewhat of an upper hand to women. I think that there's things that men say... Well, let's start with swearing. I guess it's one of those societal things that men swear more than women and men swear in the company of men more than women swear in the company of women. Whether that's true or not, I don't know. So, basically because of this new sensitivity training, who has to make adjustments? Well, what do the men do?, because it's automatically assumed that we are going to be the ones with the offensive and abusive language, and if it doesn't offend a woman then she can just say 'Well, don't worry about it, it doesn't offend me.', or not even acknowledge the fact that you said it. If it does then she'll tell you and it seems like, well, you're gonna have to pay heed to that otherwise you might find yourself in this sort of a complaint. I don't think that it is necessarily right. You can say 'Well, you're being immature because you shouldn't be using that sort of language'. Well, you know, who is to tell me what kind of language I should use in a moment of anger over something that's pivotal or essential or something like that. So, I guess in that regard... You're getting into an area where I have definite opinions about the sexual harassment training that we're undergoing. (LT, Class of 84)



It is obvious that some male officers resent having to change their behavior as a result of the increased pressure to subjugate sexual harassment within the Navy. Although the pressure to change is being imposed by society and the leaders (the majority being men) of the Navy, many officers insinuated by their statements that women exacerbate the situation by their actions. The same Pilot continued by stating:

I mean, if you're a single guy it's really tough. You almost have to, if your attracted to a girl...use some generic line like 'I think I'd be interested in seeing you sometime on a personal basis. Can we set up a date and have dinner?', in order to protect yourself. Otherwise you open yourself up, no matter how many times she's winked at you at quarters or how many times she's suggested things to you, I mean the first time that you say something that's sexually oriented that might be somewhat suggestive or could be taken the wrong way, you better hope that she likes you and she wanted you to say those things, otherwise you're fucked and she's got you and she has a witness that you've said it. So in that regard, you've interpreted the wrong signals from her and you screwed up and you stepped in the bucket of shit and now your fucking career is over with. And that's what I have a problem with, a real problem with, this sexual harassment because you feel like the woman has the upper hand in this all the way. (LT, Class of 84)

Although it is evident that some men feel that women add to the confusion over sexual harassment, other men have become so fearful of women's new power that they have altered their behavior in such a way that it may be considered detrimental to both men and women. Some of the officers interviewed indicated that they would not counsel female subordinates in the performance of their job without a third party being present. Other men indicated they would not even put

themselves in a position where they were alone with a woman for fear of being wrongly accused of sexual harassment. As one Supply Corps Officer (B005) explained:

I am paranoid that (a woman) will take something the wrong way and accuse me of some sexual harassment and I would have no defense because her word would be accepted over mine. Whether it be a supposed leer, or a cough, or something like that. I will get out of an elevator if everyone gets out but me and a female. Yes, it's paranoia. Given the number of sexual harassment training classes that I have received over time, I think that it's been drummed into me, when sexual harassment is considered a more serious offense than drug abuse by the Navy, I think there's a message there. The message is that you'd better become paranoid or your career may be taken away from you. (CDR, Class of 77)

In some of the statements presented, officers have indicated that since sexual harassment is not clearly defined, it is difficult to know when a violation has occurring. This feeling is shared among the majority of the officers interviewed. A Surface Warfare Officer (B016), on a combatant, recalled an uncomfortable situation involving a female officer (who was not a Naval Academy graduate) that was recently assigned to his ship for a trial period of two weeks. He said:

We were paranoid when the females were on board to have the door closed and have them in the room. (One woman would) come in and close the door and talk. I'm like 'Whoa, hold on!' I'd open the door and lock it open. Bolt it open... (At times) we weren't sure if she was crossing the lines of fraternization or what; not that she was talking to enlisted, but the way she'd come in and you're doing work and she'll just sit in your stateroom and talk... Among guys that's alright, but I suppose we were a little nervous because it was a girl and we didn't know what she was trying to do. For example, I was doing some work with my roommate in the wardroom when she came in and made some ridiculous comment. So we were busting on her just as we would

bust on any junior officer. I didn't think there was anything irregular about that. So she replied 'Well, you'd better be nice to me or else...or else I won't buy you a beer.' And we are thinking to ourselves 'What kind of a comment was that?' Is she saying 'I want to buy you a beer?' Is there a hidden meaning there? And the fact that we're thinking that puts us on edge. (LT, Class of 89)

It is overtly obvious, from these interviews, that men are isolating themselves or at least distancing themselves from women. However, the reasons behind their actions may be surreptitious. Men may be changing their behavior in an attempt to protect themselves from the newly acquired power of women. However, one motivating factor cannot be overlooked. By these men isolating themselves from women, they may be consciously or unconsciously trying to delay the successful integration of women in the Navy.

**N. THEME XIII: SOME MEN BELIEVE WOMEN ARE PARTLY TO BLAME FOR TAILHOOK**

**1. Theme**

Men's violence against women is probably the clearest, most straight forward expression of power they exert over women. Men use violence to sustain their dominance over women. By intimidating or sexually assaulting women, men are able to validate their masculinity as well as display, to women and other men, that they possess power over women. Additionally, by men indicating that the aggressive behavior of men towards women was caused by women themselves, they claim they are the victim instead of the oppressor.

## 2. Justification

The assaultive behavior of men towards women at the 1991 Tailhook convention, did not occur in a vacuum. Similar behavior had occurred at previous conventions. The emerging pattern of some activities, such as the gauntlet, began to assume the aura of tradition. The Department of Defense, Office of the Inspector General, Tailhook Report indicated that many of the younger officers felt that the behavior that occurred there was condoned by the Navy. After all, an atmosphere was permitted to develop over a period of years which encouraged officers to act in inappropriate ways. However, regardless of whether an atmosphere existed that condoned this behavior, it is certain that women did not "force" men to behave in such a manner nor welcome being sexually assaulted. The saying "she was asking for it", is just another example of how men construct themselves as victims. Of the women claiming to be sexually assaulted at the 1991 Tailhook Convention, not one indicated that they welcomed men sexually assaulting them. However, many of the officers interviewed indicated that "they (women present on the third floor) were asking for it".

Every officer interviewed indicated that sexual assaulting a woman was wrong. However, a majority of the men interviewed implied that women who were present on the third floor of the Las Vegas Hilton "were asking for it" by the way they appeared or acted. One Supply Corps Officer (B003) said:

I guess you can say it wasn't right..I mean it's not right someone got abused..but why were they there in the first place..Why was a young woman there in a cutoff t-shirt and jeans..Why?..I mean if I'm gonna walk into a PLACE NAKED..you know there is usually a purpose behind doing that. (LT, Class of 85)

This officer, who did not attend the convention, indicated that as a result of the way some women dress, it implies they are "asking" to be sexually assaulted. A Naval Flight Officer (B009), who attended the conference, stated:

I was up there in those suites early in the evening and it seemed to me, and I could be totally wrong, this is just my opinion, that the women that were there were hookers. There was no doubt in my mind, just the way they dressed and acted and everything...I never really saw any young girls out there. All the girls I seemed to see up there — well you know prostitution is legal in Las Vegas, they just dressed and had the look about them that...most of the girls up there seemed like hookers and it was just an accepted fact that shit was going on. (LT, Class of 87)

Likewise, this officer is indicating that sexual assault of women, in this instance, was justified since the women appeared to be prostitutes. Although this same officer believes that no woman should be subjected to this sort of treatment, he rationalizes the actions of the men by placing the blame on the women's appearance and behavior. He reiterated:

No one should be having to put up with that; I wouldn't want that to happen to my wife. By the same token I think sometimes, whether right or wrong, there's situations that you've got be careful of if you're gonna go somewhere where the chances are gonna be that way, whether it be that you're gonna go to downtown Harlem, I mean, I wouldn't do that. Not that it's right to mug me or steal my car or hold me up at gun point, and I can sit there and say 'This isn't the

way it should be, I shouldn't be treated this way', well of course you shouldn't be treated that way, but I'm smart enough to know that it's not gonna be that way. If I go there, there's a good chance that will happen. I just think that people need to be careful about that kind of stuff. (LT, Class of 87)

According to Tim Beneke, who conducted a study on men who have been convicted of rape, in all cases where a woman is said to have "asked for it, her appearance and behavior were taken as a form of speech. The saying, "Actions speak louder than words" is a widely held belief in our society. Beneke indicated that in these cases, a woman's actions (her appearance may be taken as action) were given greater emphasis than her words; an interpretation alien to the woman's intentions were given to her actions. He further indicated that the logical extension of the phrase, "she asked for it" is the idea that she wanted what happened to happen, and further, if she wanted it to happen, she deserved for it to happen. (Beneke, 1992, p. 373)

The assaultive behavior that occurred among some men at the 1991 Tailhook convention was not a result of any woman's verbal request to be sexually assaulted. It was a result of men interpreting the appearance and behavior of women in a manner which satisfied men's own objective. Regardless of how the women at the Tailhook convention dressed or acted, men decided themselves to sexually assault them.

O. **THEME XIV: MEN PERCEIVE NEW PROBLEMS WITH COMPLETE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN**

1. **Theme**

Many male Naval officers believe the complexity of integrating women into positions traditionally held by men, will create a new set of management problems.

2. **Justification**

The majority of the men interviewed indicated that the integration of women into combat and other positions, which have been traditionally occupied by men, will result in unwanted challenges. Of the officers interviewed, many provided specific examples of how the total integration of women will cause the male officer's job to be more complicated. The examples of problems most frequently noted were in the areas of physical ability, sexual promiscuity, and the effect women will have on men if women are injured or killed in combat.

Some officers interviewed believed that since women's physical fitness standards are lower than men's, women will have difficulty completing assignments that required a higher degree of physical strength. Consequently, if women do not possess a man's strength it would, according to the officers interviewed, affect the morale of men and lower the effectiveness of an organization. A Surface Warfare Officer (B012) explained:

Women are going to have to prove themselves down in the engineer room...If you're a mechanic you have to be able to turn valves that are jammed and very hard to turn. If you can't do it then the guys are gonna look down on you...You can't just assign (women) a job being administrative or training Petty Officer or something like that because that's building up that wall between men and women. To the guys, you're gonna really have to make sure that you never seem to be shrinking away from assigning a woman to do a job because you don't think she can do it, 'cause then it will be 'I get screwed 'cause I have to do every hard repair because we have these women and they can't do squat.' Although it works out that way anyway...the same guys right now do all the hard repairs because they're the best mechanics, they're the strongest or whatever. That will continue; but you can't start letting the guys think that the women are a drain on the resource of the division. You can't let men think that a woman is just a body filling a slot and that they're taking the place of someone else who could help. It's gonna be very tough. I think it will make the job much harder. (LT, Class of 87)

A Pilot (B008) recalled an event while landing on a ship which displayed the physical dichotomy between men and women. He stated:

One thing that I always thought that was inherently dangerous is that you land the helicopter and you usually have one person on either side carrying a set of chains and a set of chocks. They throw them under the plane and secure the aircraft before you even do anything. Well, on this ship they had a male chock and chain runner on one side and they had two female chock and chain runners on the other side because of the size of the chocks and the weight of the chain. They'd have one woman running out with the chocks and one with the chain. Normally I don't think anyone would look twice at that but to me that was, not so much double people for a job, but it was one extra person in a hazardous environment...It was ridiculous. Get a bigger woman out there or get a man out there.' That's all there is to it. I just didn't see any reason why you should do that. The whole goal of the whole flight deck environment is to keep as few people on the flight deck as possible. That, to me was a little ridiculous; all in the name of giving someone a billet. (LT, Class of 88)



It is obvious, from the previous statements, that there is some anxiety regarding whether women possess the physical strength and stamina necessary to accomplish jobs which have been traditionally occupied by men. Most officers interviewed indicated they were concerned about a women's physical abilities not just for their benefit, but primarily for the men's. Most officers interviewed indicated that for women to be successfully integrated, they must prove to men that they are able to do what a man does. Like the Naval Academy, men are expecting women to suppress their femininity and display masculine traits. However, if women succumb to the pressures of men to suppress their femininity, just like the Naval Academy, a paradoxical situation will result. Women are encouraged to suppress all vestiges of femininity and act masculine, but if they overstep the boundaries established by men, they are likely to be criticized for their behavior.

One of those boundaries is sexual promiscuity. The majority of the officers interviewed felt that integrating women on combatants would make their jobs more difficult because additional oversight would be required to ensure men and women do not engaging in sexual activity on ships. Interestingly, many of the officers indicated that women, not men, would be the cause of increased sexual activity. As a Surface Warfare Officer (B001) explained:

One of the biggest headaches, based on hear say, is that relationships on tenders is a Division officer's whole nightmare...because Sally...NYMPHO SALLY wants

to screw a guy from every division. I mean that sounds crazy but it happens...I mean it happens.. women will add another facet of headaches to a division officer's daily life. All the crazy things that happen at a factory in the civilian world don't happen in the factory, they happen outside it. The same things will happen in the Navy, but because sailors live on the ship, it will happen on the ship. But people will get used to it I guess. But I've been told it's a nightmare on a tender. (LT, Class of 87)

This officer believes that shipboard integration will make his job much tougher because women are sexually promiscuous. There is a double standard in regard to sexual activity. An example of how men approve of the sexual promiscuity of other men is provided by a Pilot (B008). He discussed the actions of his male subordinates when landing on a tender at sea:

The normal thing when we landed on board a ship was our pilots would stay up front or maybe go out to relieve himself, whatever. The crewmen would take a walk around the aircraft to be sure that everything looked O.K. Then we'd take a look. Invariably, the crewmen would get back on and he'd say, you know, 'You've got oil leaking out of the tail gear box, we need to shut down'. You'd go out and there's nothing leaking out of there. Well the standard package was that these guys wanted to spend the night on the ship. The whole reason was they were gonna get lucky, they knew that. The standard deal they had going, was that if you were a normal male and you got stuck on the ship you'd definitely meet a woman for the night...well, actually, you stood a good chance of meeting a woman for the night; and if you had a hundred dollars you would definitely have a woman for that night. That to me, I said, 'O.K., that's not good', but that's the way things are. (LT, Class of 88)

Although the physical abilities and sexual promiscuity of women were of concern to the majority of the men interviewed, women being raped or killed by the enemy was an area of concern that was exclusive to Naval Aviators. Many of

the Pilots and Naval Flight Officers indicated they felt uncomfortable with the thought of flying with women in combat situations. Several Aviators indicated that as a result of their upbringing, a women being raped or killed would impact them more severely than if a male pilot was injured or killed.

A Naval Flight Officer (B010) explained:

Right now I wouldn't be comfortable flying with a woman in combat because...I would feel kind of a sense that I had to look out for the woman in the other airplane. That's probably a pretty antiquated opinion but right now I think there are probably other people that share that same opinion that if there was a woman out there with a man, you kind of feel an obligation to look out for that woman. There's other issues there such as, if a woman gets shot down how does she handle a POW situation because obviously the enemy can add rape to their bag of tricks. (LT, Class of 88)

A Pilot (B006) exhibiting similar feelings with regard to women participating in combat stated:

I still kind of hold sacred, in my own mind anyway, that the men should be doing the bulk of the fighting. I get this just from my upbringing. I'm not so crazy about seeing a whole bunch of women next to me; I've never had to go through combat, but next to me getting blown to shreds. It just seems like, maybe that's where society is headed. There are obviously places, Israel and other states, where women have been fighting side-by-side in combat with men for quite awhile. I would much rather see a guy out there doing it and getting hurt or something than I would a female. (LT, Class of 84)

Although the majority of officers interviewed indicated that the total integration of women throughout the Naval service would result in additional problems, many believed that women possess the ability and talent to perform any job in the Navy. This was particularly evident among some of the Surface Warfare Officers. Every officer interviewed was

asked to describe a memorable event in his career where he overcame insurmountable odds and achieved successful results. After each officer described his most memorable challenge, he was then asked if he thought a woman could have accomplished the same results. In all but a few cases, every Surface Warfare Officer indicated a woman could have accomplished the same feat. A Surface Warfare Officer (B014) who was in charge of First Division (the division responsible for performing such evolutions as underway replenishment, anchoring and mooring) and who had recently worked with women in an operational environment, indicated that his most noteworthy accomplishment was when he and his division completed an extremely complex underway replenishment. He was then asked if a woman or a division of women could have accomplished the same deed. He stated:

Oh, yeah...No problem. I mean, there's actually nothing that I do that a woman couldn't do. They can do everything my guys do. I mean, it doesn't take a guy five-hundred pounds and the biggest muscles you ever saw to do something my guys do...absolutely, they can do anything we can do. (LTjg, Class of 91)

Interestingly, among those Surface Warfare Officers who had previous successful experiences with women in an operational setting, all felt that women could performed to a level that was equal or above that of men.

P. THEME XV: SUCCESSFUL CROSS GENDER RELATIONSHIPS EXIST

1. Theme

Although many of the officers interviewed described ways in which women may detract from the overall effectiveness of the Navy, the majority of the officers recalled experiences in which they worked closely with women and felt they performed to a level that was equal or above that expected of men.

2. Justification

Despite male officer's believing their jobs will become more difficult with the total integration of women in the Navy, many men believe women will successfully integrate and contribute positively to the operational effectiveness of the Navy. A Supply Corps Officer (B004) recalled his experience within a contracting organization. He stated:

One woman that was in the same program I was in was outstanding. She was professional at all times and you knew she was going places...She was very personable and was very willing to give advise both personally and professionally. In that regard I think she did a better job at that than her male peers at that command. As an aside, I think that the civilian women did probably a better job than the civilian man counterparts at that command...the women seemed more focused...I think the contracting field is a field in which women can work easily equal with male counterparts and probably do a better job...Male contracting officers were willing to make a deal quickly and press on. However, the women contracting officers would say, 'we are getting close but we are not quite there.'...they would want to make sure they got a good deal for the government..and that's probably the right attitude to have. (LT, Class of 84)

A Naval Flight Officer (B010) remembered his experience with a female officer in flight school. He stated:

I had one female instructor pilot in flight school that I was very impressed with. She did a good job, she was a great pilot and she actually helped me more than a lot of the male instructor pilots. I'd say she helped the image because she did a good job; she was professional; she didn't flaunt what she did; she did her job and she did her job well. So I think she helped as far as my personal.....you know, my experiences with women...She improved my personal comfort level or perception of women, she added to the positive image of women. (LT, Class of 88)

The officers interviewed provided several other examples of how women, in their particular line of work, have significantly contributed to the success of their organizations. However, it is apparent that a woman's success is measured, by men, on how well she performs relative to men. As one Pilot (B017) remarked:

The women that are in the military community in aviation and that do their jobs, I think they're pretty much accepted as equals. They are accepted as equals because they are doing the same thing we are, they make their functional check for flight pilot. They get the qualifications. They go on the detachments. The ones that carry their weight, they're held in equal esteem...There's this woman I knew...She was skinny as a stick and she was flying 53's...53's are a lot bigger than H-3's and when you turn the hydraulics off in those things and it's even worse and she did it. And I think it's just a mental thing. She ran a lot. She worked out all the time and she kept herself in good enough shape and good enough physical condition that she could do the things that she needed to. So it just comes down to whether or not they want to. I think the women can do it; it isn't so physically taxing that 'Oh, a woman can't do this because it's so hard.' It isn't that hard. It's something that can be done if they want to; if they put the effort into maintaining their physical condition so they can do it. (LT, Class of 88)

Although these officer's attitudes have been socially constructed to support the domination of men and the

subordination of women, it is interesting to note that as a result of women demonstrating their ability to perform outstandingly in occupations, traditionally held by men, men are optimistic about the success women will achieve in a fully integrated Navy.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. CONCLUSION

As the Department of the Navy's budget continues to decrease, the Navy's top leaders are making difficult decisions on how to reduce end strength without jeopardizing our position as the world's strongest Naval fighting force. Regardless of the number of Naval personnel it will require to maintain the Navy of the future, it is imperative that the largest practical talent pool from which to draw and selecting the most qualified individual for each job in the Navy is available. Women in the Navy have continually proven their ability to perform outstandingly in the past and will continue to do so in the future. However, it is essential that they be given equitable opportunity and consideration in competing for jobs with men. By not considering women for various jobs within the Navy, it greatly reduces the talent pool and may force the Navy to fill a position with a lesser qualified individual. Although the new policy regarding women in combat has provided additional opportunities for women, barriers may still exist that prevent the expeditious integration of women in the Navy.

Gender bias is an area which must be eliminated within the Navy in order for women to integrate successfully and to



compete equally with their male counterparts. However, eliminating gender bias among men is not something that can occur overnight. Since gender is socially constructed and biases are typically established by the time a boy is five or six years old, it may be difficult to change the attitudes of men immediately. But as this study indicates, the attitudes of men can be changed when men and women work together and share positive life experiences.

This study produced five recommendations derived from the themes provided in Chapter Four. They are:

1. Make gender "equality" training available to all Naval personnel.
2. Open informal lines of communication for Naval personnel to relay gender bias issues and concerns to superiors.
3. Establish a course at the Naval Academy which educates midshipmen on how gender bias is constructed and what can be done to eliminate it.
4. Institute a one-standard physical readiness test for all Naval personnel and establish minimum requirements regardless of gender.
5. Establish standard physical fitness requirements for each job type.

#### **B. RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### **1. Conduct Gender "Equality" Training**

Education is a key component in implementing change in any organization. Making people aware that gender bias is socially constructed and that it is in a constant state of change, will give people a better understanding of gender

issues and the knowledge to develop strategies for eliminating gender bias in the Navy. However, education alone will not eliminate gender bias. As the Navy learned while eliminating racial discrimination from its ranks, a total leadership commitment is also an essential element in effecting change.

It is important that we do not misinterpret gender bias as sexual harassment. Sexual harassment deals with inappropriate behavior, which is often visible. However, gender bias deals with inappropriate attitudes which may be visible but are more likely to be concealed. Consequently, detecting gender bias is much more difficult and does not provide much of an opportunity to administer punitive action against those who are in violation. This is why education and the commitment from top leaders is so critical to eliminating gender bias in the Navy. Education and the actions of our leaders has a great effect on influencing the behavior and attitudes of Naval personnel. The threat of punishment also has a profound impact on people as well. However, since gender bias is socially constructed and often difficult to detect (because those attitudes are perceived as normal) the threat of punishment will undoubtedly have less of an impact than education and committed leadership. That does not dismiss the requirement to impose punishment on those who violate the Navy's policy regarding sexual discrimination. It just

suggests that the Navy should concentrate its efforts on education and the total commitment of its leaders to create a gender neutral environment.

**2. Open Informal Lines of Communication for Naval Personnel to Relay Gender Bias Issues to Superiors**

Being able to freely voice issues and concerns about gender bias to the highest echelons of any organization will be a benefit not only to those raising concerns, but also the entire organization. Frequently, top leaders of an organization are insulated from the lower echelons by numerous levels of management. This insulation is often essential to ensure leaders are focusing their attention on strategic management issues. However, since leaders are commonly insulated from the human relations side of the organization, not only are leaders sometimes unaware of what subordinate's attitudes are within the organization, but often the leaders' attitudes do not filter down to the lowest levels. This lack of communication can be detrimental to any organization.

Recently, New York Times reported a story about a female first-year student at the Air Force Academy who had told campus authorities that several young men had sexually assaulted her outside the cadet gymnasium in February 1993. Nine days after she reported the incident, the Academy's Superintendent, Lieutenant General Bradley C. Hosmer, gathered most of the Air Force Academy's 518 female cadets in the campus auditorium. He ordered his male aides to leave and also

dismissed two men in the projection booth. Then he removed his insignia of rank and promised the women confidentiality in exchange for the "ground truth" about sexual harassment on the campus. For nearly four emotionally charged hours, the women poured out their fears and grievances in response to General Hosmer's questions on how many of them had experienced sexual assault or other forms of harassment, or knew someone who had. It was reported that women were angry that the General Hosmer had not held a similar meeting previous to the assault, but it was apparent, by his comments, that he was insulated from the issues and concerns women had prior to the assault. General Hosmer said in subsequent interview that he had sensed "warning indicators" of problems, but was "stunned and disappointed" at what he heard. Although General Hosmer may have sensed problems, it is apparent that he did not realize the enormity of the problem that existed at the Air Force Academy. By no means are we insinuating that General Hosmer was remiss in his duties, this example is merely used to display how leaders are often insulated from the attitudes and behavior of their subordinates. Therefore, it is imperative for a leader of any organization to establish procedures to ensure he or she is aware of the attitudes and behaviors of their subordinates.

At the Air Force Academy a 24 hour confidential sexual assault hot line has been established. Although the New York Times did not mention who is responsible for monitoring the

calls or if General Hosmer is personally briefed on the context of each call, this should be a requirement. Again, if leaders are insulated from what is really happening at the lower levels in their organization it is impossible for them to take appropriate action to correct the problem. Therefore, it is recommended that informal lines of communication for Naval personnel be established in all commands to relay gender bias issues and concerns to the leader of each respective organization.

### **3. Educate Midshipmen on Gender Bias**

As recommended above, education is a key component in implementing change to any organization. Therefore, it is recommended that the Naval Academy establish a course for midshipmen so that midshipmen understand how gender bias is constructed and what they can do, personally, to eliminate it from the Navy and society.

The Air Force Academy's philosophy department has already established a course called "Gender, Race and Human Dignity" in order to do just that. This process should not only focus on women's issues but men's as well. Understanding men's fears, biases, and anger will allow a deeper understanding to surface. It is important however to understand that this will be a re-education process, and re-education is frequently in danger of reaching only the official system of values, the level of verbal expression and

not the conduct. A factor of great importance in bringing about a change in sentiment is the degree to which the individual becomes actively involved in the problem. Lacking this involvement, will diminish the possibility that the individual will assume the group's social beliefs. The re-educative process has to fulfill a task which is essentially equivalent to a change in culture. It is a process in which changes of knowledge and beliefs, changes of values and standards, changes of emotional attachments and needs, and changes of everyday conduct occur not piecemeal and independently of each other, but within the framework of the individual's total life in the group. Only by anchoring his or her own conduct in something as large and bonding as the culture of a group, can the individuals stabilize their new beliefs sufficiently to keep them immune from the every day influences which he or she, as individuals, are subject. (Lewin, 1948, pp. 64-66)

It becomes important to remember that people cannot be taught who feel that they are at the same time being attacked. Despite the status differences between teacher and student, they have to feel as members of one group in matters involving their sense of values. The chances of re-education are elevated whenever a strong "we" feeling is created. The establishment that everyone speaks the same language, is in the same boat, and has gone through the same difficulties, must be stressed in order to accomplish these intricate

changes. Discovery of answers by the group is one main way of accomplishing complete acceptance of facts previously rejected. The facts now become facts and an individual will then believe facts they, themselves, have discovered in the same way as they believe in themselves, or in their group. It must be understood that in attacking gender bias, we must create cultural change within the Navy and additionally adopt an open training atmosphere that does not attack the individual as the problem, but embraces him or her as part of the solution. Only by making midshipmen aware of the complexity of gender and providing them means to eliminate it, can the attitudes within the brigade of midshipmen at the Naval Academy be changed.

#### **4. Establish Minimum Physical Fitness Requirements Regardless of Gender**

Throughout this study men have expressed a great deal of resentment over the different "minimum" physical fitness requirements that exist between men and women. Most men interviewed felt that if the Navy is truly moving towards gender equality, then a standard "minimum" physical fitness level should be established for all Naval personnel regardless of sex. Many of the officers interviewed indicated that at the Naval Academy, all midshipmen, regardless of their sex, were supposed to be treated equally. However, by establishing different minimum physical fitness standard for men and women, it reinforces that men and women are not equal. Therefore, in

order to reinforce that men and women are equal, it is recommended that one minimum physical fitness standard be established regardless of sex.

#### **5. Maintain One Standard for Each Job Type**

Many men interviewed recognized that many jobs within the Navy are more physically demanding than others. Because of this fact, many men believe there should not only be one minimum physical fitness standard (regardless of sex) for all Naval Personnel, but also standard physical fitness requirements (regardless of sex) for every type of job there is in the Navy. Many of the officers interviewed, particularly referring to those jobs that may require hand-to-hand combat, expressed concern that if physical fitness standards were lowered to accommodate quotas, it would increase the risk to themselves if they had to serve with a man or woman that was less qualified. While most men indicated they wanted the highest standards for life or death combat jobs, many men indicated they would feel more comfortable if every individual could pass a standard physical fitness test specifically tailored to a particular type of job. Therefore, it is recommended that the Navy, aside from the minimum standard physical fitness test, establish standard physical fitness requirements for each type of job in the Navy.



**APPENDIX A**  
**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

**Introductory Statement:**

We are doing a study of gender bias in the Navy. As you know, most of the attention on this subject has been devoted to what it is like for women in the Navy, how they have been victimized and harassed and discriminated against. What rarely gets looked at is what it is like for men in the Navy, and particularly, what it is like to be part of the Navy when the culture is so radically changing. Specifically, we want to know about your experiences at the Naval Academy, and your perception of the females' integration and role at the Academy, and what your thoughts are concerning women in combat and their integration into combat positions. Few people appreciate what life is like for men in the military and very seldom are men asked their opinions about these topics. Hopefully with your input we will be able to more closely understand the mechanics of male and female interaction in the military setting. Therefore, I am going to ask you questions about yourself, your family life, what led you to go to the Naval Academy and how you feel about women in the military and

combat. I will ask about your previous billets, and whether you think women are capable of performing those same tasks; if "yes" why?, and if "no" why not?

I want to emphasize that this is a confidential interview, so please don't mention your name or anyone else's name. We hope this will make you as comfortable as possible, so you can say whatever is on your mind.

**Interview:**

First tell me a little about your family life, mom, dad, brothers or sisters where you grew up and what made you decide to go to the Naval Academy?

probe: relation between mom and dad (did mom play the traditional role?) ideals and values that may have motivated him to go.

Tell me about your high school days, did you play sports, and what role did girls play in your high school days? Did you date? Did you have any girls that were just friends?

probe: what was his opinion of girls, what role did they play in his life in high school. What group of people did he associate with.

How did you get interested in the Naval Academy and tell me about plebe summer and plebe year, did you like it, did you have any females in your company?

probe: were there any issues specific to the women during the early years at the Academy, and did his opinions of women change from his opinions during high school.

Did you like the Naval Academy and do you recall any specific incidents which singled out the girls in your class?

probe: were any of the issues caused by policies in place at the Academy, how does he talk about women at the Academy.

Tell me about your career and how you ended up in your community?

probe: write down each assignment and billet and what it was like. Did he have any role models such as a CO or a senior officer. What makes him get excited, or mad.

Some times men say it is uncomfortable to have women around, that they have to be careful, that this interrupts their comfort and camaraderie. How do you feel about this?

probe: ask for examples of a time when he felt guarded, like at a bar or the officers club, etc.

Tell me about your most successful mission or exercise which made you realize the culmination of all your training.

Receive answer and ask if he thinks if there is anything in what he just said that a women couldn't do.

Some people say that women do not belong in the military, have you ever seen or had any experiences to support this belief?

Receive answer and follow on with: Some say women do not belong in combat. What is your opinion?

Have you ever experienced a professional peer relationship with a woman in the military?

What is your experience with women at NPS been like (if he is an NPS student)?

# APPENDIX B

Interview Sample:  
(n=40)

SPECIALTY	#	USNA CLASS	RACE	RANK	SINGLE
Maintenance	1	83	Cauc	O3	N
Aviation	14	79/84/85/ 86/87/88	Cauc	O3/O4	N
Civil Engineer	2	82/84	Cauc	O3/O4	N
Intelligence	1	86	Cauc	O3	N
Non-Designated	2	92	Cauc	O1	Y
Special Ops	1	86	Cauc	O3	Y
Supply Corps	3	77/84/85	Cauc	O3/O5	N
Surface Warfare	15	82/85/87/ 88/90/91	Cauc/Hisp(2) / Filipino(2)	O2/O3/C 4	10N/5Y
Surface Nuclear	1	85	Cauc	O3	N

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